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The Church and the people

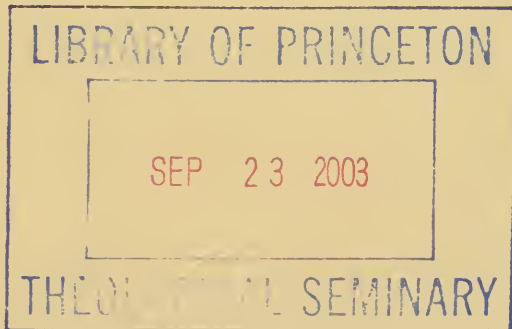
ST GILES' LECTURES

Sixth Series

THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE

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THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE

INTRODUCTORY
NATIONAL RELIGION IN THEORY AND FACT
FREE-WILL OFFERINGS, TITHES, &c.
THE PAROCHIAL SYSTEM
SECESSIONS FROM THE CHURCH, AND VOLUNTARYISM
RELIGIOUS EQUALITY
DISESTABLISHMENT AND DISENDOWMENT
PRESBYTERIAN UNION



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P R E F A C E.

THE following Lectures, which form the Sixth Series of the St Giles' Lectures, were delivered in St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, in 1885-86. In consequence of illness, the lecturer who had agreed to deliver the sixth Lecture was compelled to abandon his intention, but the Rev. Andrew Gray of Dalkeith, kindly consented, at short notice, to undertake the duty. The Lectures are published in the hope that they may prove useful both to those who heard and to those who did not hear them. In dealing with subjects to some extent necessarily of a controversial nature, it is right to say that each lecturer is only responsible for the opinions expressed in his own Lecture.

While these pages were passing through the press, one of the lecturers, the Very Reverend Principal Tulloch of St Andrews, has been called to his rest. To the readers of the previous series of the St Giles' Lectures his name is familiar. In the present series, although in failing health, he undertook a Lecture, the course being one in which he felt the deepest interest. This Lecture, the second in the volume, was finished under great difficulties. When the time for its delivery in St Giles' arrived, Principal Tulloch was unable to discharge that duty, and Dr MacGregor of St Cuthbert's kindly read it for him. The Lecture, as it appears in these pages, is the last literary work of its author, and was written during a time of great bodily weakness in support of the Church he had served so faithfully and loved so well.

N O T E.

As the subject of these Lectures is one which excited deep interest in the country, it was suggested to the St Giles' Lecture Committee, that were the Lectures read in other parishes besides that of St Giles, it would have the effect of diffusing useful information on the subject of the position and work of the Church of Scotland as a national church. This idea was favourably entertained by many of the ministers and kirk-sessions of the Church ; and the following took the Lectures for the purpose of reading them to their congregations :

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ST GILES' LECTURES.

SIXTH SERIES—THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY—HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE
'UNION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE;
ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

By MALCOLM CAMPBELL TAYLOR, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Edinburgh; and one of Her Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland.

DISSENT from the religion of the State was long prohibited throughout the Roman world. But as Rome extended its conquests, a policy of expediency intervened to tolerate the religions of the vanquished. In course of time, the law recognised a multitude of religions as practically religions of the State, while it tolerated others from which it withheld formal recognition. Hence, during the Augustan period, and the first and second centuries of the Christian era, the sacred rites of many races were openly solemnised in the imperial city.

The Christian benefited by the toleration which

had been extended to Judaism, so long as he was regarded as a variety of Jew, just as he also suffered from the odium with which, at times, that race was visited. But as Christianity drew apart from Judaism, and acquired in public view an identity of its own, the protection which had been ceded to the Jew ceased to profit the Christian. With the admission of ever-increasing numbers, and of varieties of nationality, the Church gradually moved into a distinct position. Simultaneously, the conditions of its existence were materially altered. Not yet, and no longer passing for, a national religion, it existed on sufferance; for it was not till the reign of Gallienus (260-8), and then only for a short time, that it was formally tolerated by the State. Toleration, indeed, in the modern sense of the word, was unknown. The religion of the stranger was allowed to the stranger, to whom it properly belonged, but in the eye of the law no man was free to choose his own religion. Practice, however, did not always coincide. The law frequently winked at observances which were contrary to its spirit and expression. Many Romans of the period affected a certain liberality of sentiment regarding religion, and combined the worship of ancestral gods with that of foreign deities. As a rule, the fashion was left to pursue its course, but, occasion calling for it, was suppressed. The principle of intolerance underlay the Roman practice of toleration.

At the same time, the sufferance accorded to Christianity was guarded, to some extent, by the multiplicity of religious rites which were winked at or permitted, the decay of religious earnestness,

the imperial form of government, and the character of the emperors. The religions of the Roman world were in number such that Christianity frequently went on its way unnoticed. It was lost in the crowd. The educated classes affected philosophy, rather than the popular religion, and their influence tended to abate fanaticism. Sceptics in so far as the popular religions were concerned, they helped to draw off the pressure of suspicion from the Christians, who in this respect were sceptics like themselves. Even the imperial form of government was in their favour. It was less exclusively Roman; it dealt with a wider area of national interests, and was more tolerant, partly of choice and partly of necessity, than the republic by which it had been preceded. The general policy of the emperors of the first and second centuries was, on the whole, favourable to the diffusion of Christian thought and practice. With rare exceptions, it was only when popular clamour demanded it, and because there was a supposed political necessity for it, that they interfered to the detriment of the Christians. These safeguards, however, were of no avail against popular fury in times of excitement. A pestilence, or a famine, or a lengthened drought, an inundation, or an incursion of the barbarians, or any transient, unusual, physical phenomenon which suggested to the superstitious multitude that the gods were angry, also reminded them of the atheists in their midst, for such in popular estimation were all Christians. They neither repaired to the temples nor sacrificed. They made no oblations. They did not pay the customary reverence to the statues of

the gods, as they passed along the streets. In the earlier period of their history they had neither temples nor churches, nor lares or lararium in their houses, to witness to their piety and their reverence for the usages of social and domestic life. They also considered themselves bound to abstain from almost every public amusement, and to absent themselves from festivities which, in the eyes of all others, were not only joyous and innocent but sacred. When a neighbour's child received its name, or when his boy first put on raiment that betokened manhood, or when his daughter was given in marriage, the Christian hesitated to join the circle of friends, because on these occasions there were religious solemnities from which he recoiled. Or if he overcame his scruples and were present, he was an awkward, ill-omened guest who could not pledge the gods. Even the annual festivals, with their crowds, excitement, and religious and patriotic observances, drew attention to a class who were persistently absent. On the ground of their supposed atheism, other and more odious charges were founded. And, as prudence dictated the avoidance of publicity in the celebration of the mysteries of their faith, they were regarded as men who loved concealment, and had at heart some hateful purpose. They were suspected and dreaded as a secret society that conspired against the most cherished religious customs, perhaps against the State. In popular estimation they had thrown to the winds every sacred obligation, and were dead to every feeling of humanity. They were morose, unsocial, and unpatriotic; the deluded but obstinate adherents

of a depraved superstition, and as such, at the mercy of the informer who might be tempted by avarice or dislike.

Such, in the main, was the condition of the Church for nearly three hundred years; the third century closing for the Christian cause in darkness, if not despair, amid the prolonged agonies of the Diocletian persecution (303-11). The essential vigour which enabled Christianity to outlive the fiercest of all the storms that had tried its stability, also secured for it that notable and unexpected political victory with which the name of Constantine the Great must always be associated. The wounds of eight years of more than heroic endurance were scarce healed, when, in the drift of the times, Paganism and Christianity found themselves at last face to face, not wholly disproportionate forces, with each of them a fit leader and representative for the impending struggle. The contest between Licinius and Constantine, with its vast political considerations, was also the mortal duel between Paganism and Christianity. In the fall of Licinius the old faith went down before the new, and the triumph of Constantine¹ became the turning-point in the history of the Church.

The revolution, although unforeseen, had been inevitable; and the Church entered at once, with alacrity and a good conscience, on the inheritance of security, property, and influence, from which, after innumerable conflicts, Paganism had been expelled. The course of events is clear. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities with his rival, important

¹ The crowning victory of Chrysopolis was won in September 323.

concessions to Christianity had been made by Constantine. Religious cults of whatever name had been permitted, conversion to Christianity sanctioned, Christian communities empowered to receive legacies, and the clergy exempted from military service. The ecclesiastical edifices that still survived the ravages of the persecution, together with the confiscated estates of the Christians, had been restored; and with the termination of the great duel, the burden of oppression was everywhere removed. The offerings of the first-fruits and tithes, which had probably been customary in all the churches of Jewish origin, became general. When these or similar oblations did not exist, or were insufficient, the incomes of the ministers of religion were supplemented, or provided, from the municipal and imperial treasuries; and as Paganism decayed, its temporal possessions were made over, in whole or in part, to the Church. And when, finally, the jurisdiction that had long been exercised in the Church by its own officials now received legal sanction, so that in spiritual matters no appeal could be raised in the civil tribunals, the position of the Church was one in which, in its own judgment, it could use its gifts and powers among its own membership, and employ its great trust, to the entire satisfaction of its principles. Its members, in common with all other subjects of the State, enjoyed legal protection. It had the countenance and succour of the temporal power. It was free to exercise its authority over all its adherents, and its claims in respect of doctrine, worship, and discipline had been allowed.

But the ecclesiastical upheaval necessarily affected the Roman world as a whole. The change of belief and sentiment among the people themselves, whether Pagan or Christian, naturally transferred the right of asylum, for instance, from the discredited fanes and altars of the gods to Christian churches. These now became the natural refuge for such as fled from violence and intolerable oppression, for now neither the avenger of blood nor the spoiler of the innocent dared violate their sanctity. The transference of this right from the one sanctuary to the other was gradual, and existed as a fact long before it obtained imperial sanction in the following century.¹ Nearly related to it was the right of episcopal intercession, in virtue of which a prerogative of mercy, or of merciful mediation, was tacitly assigned to the Church, on behalf of prisoners and criminals. It bore fruit on notable occasions, as when Flavian of Antioch set out from his distant see to intercede with Theodosius the Great on behalf of its seditious citizens; and it issued (529) in an obligation being laid on the clergy to visit the public prisons twice in the week, on Wednesdays and Fridays. Of yet wider range and incidence was the legal sanction of Sunday. In keeping with the growth of Christian feeling in the western division of the empire over which he ruled, and prior to his rupture with Licinius, Constantine had interdicted the sittings of the courts on Sundays, and the performance of secular labour in towns (321). Agriculture was not included in the prohibition, but his successors

¹ In 431, under Theodosius II.

extended it to the collection of revenue, and with indifferent success to theatrical entertainments. As Christian ideas and the principles of Christian morality thus found acceptance with the people and their rulers, they necessarily told on legislation, and gained for themselves increasing expression in the imperial decrees. The effect which they produced in the course of the next and subsequent century may yet be read in that great compendium of Roman law, the *Corpus Juris Civilis*; it is still experienced by all European nations, and constitutes the basis of their law. Compilation as it is of imperial decrees from the time of Hadrian to that of Justinian,¹ with a substratum that dates from the pre-Christian period, it bears on its front the name of our Lord,² as if to indicate the patronage to which the entire edifice of Roman law, the world's masterpiece of constructive ethics, had at length been dedicated. Constantine had already shown his desire to bring the public law into line with Christian sentiment, by abolishing the punishment of crucifixion and the branding of criminals on the forehead, and similar enactments; and he had sought to cleanse the sources of its administration, by a law directed against the venality and extortion of advocates and judges. Some of the provisions which he initiated waited long for their necessary sequel. The gladiatorial exhibitions maintained themselves with a tenacity that frustrated the desires of enlightened lawgivers, and defied the thunderbolts of divine

¹ The Institutions, Pandects or Digest, and the Code were issued by 529. The Novels followed later in 529, the year of Justinian's death.

² 'In nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi.'

wrath which were hurled against them by the great preachers of the Church. Yet what the wearers of the purple despaired of accomplishing, the self-sacrificing impulse of a monk is said to have effected. He had come from the far East to Rome, when one of these shows was being held. As he looked down from the amphitheatre on the contests below, unlike those vestals whose privilege it was to urge on the combatants, and to award or withhold the fatal stroke, and who rarely failed to catch the sanguinary spirit of the spectators, or to burn at the sight of blood with the brutal passions of the arena, he was moved to fling himself between the combatants, and stayed the cruel sport.¹ He paid with his life for a noble impulse, but the deed made an indelible impression and ranged the wounded feeling of Christendom on the side of imperial authority, to the total abolition of an inhuman pastime by which the majesty of Rome had been disgraced. The secular, moral sentiment, however, was not in all points behind the Christian. The institution of slavery, for instance, was regarded by all parties as wholly consonant with the highest forms of morality and social order. It had the sanction of the Mosaic law; it had preserved myriads of vanquished from a violent and untimely death,² and was frequently relieved by mutual kindness and fidelity. Yet even with regard to it and other social problems, there had been introduced an inward preparation and tone of feeling that made for the safety and more

¹ Theodoret. *Ecccl. Hist.* v. 26. About 404.

² The single victory of Stilicho over Rhadagaisus, 406, is said to have thrown 200,000 captives on the slave-markets.

considerate treatment of the weak, as well as for the future liberation of the slave. Social and domestic life throughout the empire felt the influence of the new leaven. Sudden change was not the rule, but instead a gradual and, for the most part, imperceptible adaptation of the old ways and institutions to the new ideas and sentiments. The Christian conscience, which the Paganism of three centuries had oppressed, had been liberated; and once free, it presumed to influence or direct the helm that controlled the State. The new force necessarily produced kindred changes over the entire surface of society, with a tendency to redress wrong and befriend the helpless. The position of women was elevated; 'the dignity of marriage was restored by the Christians,'¹ while the needy of both sexes were ultimately regarded as, in the eye of the law, the peculiar charge of the Church.

But none of the changes thus briefly outlined was thrust by an imperious, secular power on the Church. Each and all were concessions to its spirit and growing authority, and were made gradually, and in part before a position of ascendancy had been secured. Its complaint was that the imperial legislation lagged behind in the reformation of abuses, and its constant effort, to urge it forward, animated by its own ideal, to its own goal. And as, under God, it owed its altered position in the world to its own inherent vitality and vigour, it now entered on it as a rightful inheritance, and sought in the formative and constructive spirit which had characterised it from the first to mould the outward circumstances, and

¹ Gibbon, *Rom. Emp.* ch. xlv. (vol. v. 296, Smith's Ed.).

regenerate the inward condition of mankind, so as that the kingdom of Christ might have the fullest possible realisation. Union with the State, in the first instance, and on the largest scale, for the power with which it coalesced was the civilised world, was thus on the side of the Church, a genuine offshoot from its own roots. Neither inveiglement nor bribe, nor yet coercion, can reasonably be put forward as a partial cause. It was at once a natural and providential growth. Consequently it is impossible to fix the precise date at which it took effect, or to refer to a deed or compact, in which, as high contracting parties, they declared or ratified their intentions. They grew up side by side, drew together, and ultimately consorted in a union in which, without losing its identity, each was the true complement of the other. Their origin was of God, their interests were interlaced by time.

We have still to trace the methods, and where possible the steps by which a similar union came to pass on a more limited, but to us not less interesting field. It is now impossible to determine when Christianity first gained a foothold in Britain. An expression used by one of the early fathers of the Church gave rise to the belief, that this island had been visited by St Paul.¹ A quaint and beautiful legend, not wanting in boldness of conception, brings Joseph of Arimathæa to Glastonbury, the ancient Avalon or Ynys-vitryn,² memorable for the holy Thorn into which the staff of the saintly pilgrim grew. The more trustworthy narrative of the historian, Bede, tells how about A.D. 177 a British

¹ Clem. *Ep. ad Cor.* 5.

² Place of apples—Isle of glass.

king prevailed with the Bishop of Rome to receive him into his fold, and how the Britons remained thereafter in undisturbed possession of the faith until the time of the emperor, Diocletian.¹ Although in this account he cannot be implicitly followed, there is reason to believe that Christianity had a certain hold on the Roman portion of the island about the middle of the second century, probably, for the most part, among the foreign settlers, their clients and dependents. The pathetic story of St Alban's martyrdom,² which is assigned to the beginning of the fourth century and the persecuting times of Diocletian, may be accepted, in spite of certain difficulties, as resting on a historical foundation.

Self-offered victim, for his friend he died,
And for the faith.

Of the existence of a British Church from this date, and for some time before it, to the close of the Roman domination, there is no doubt; but neither the evidence that has been gathered from coins and tablets of the Roman period, nor the documentary witnesses, point to the conclusion that it had filled the land. In the course of the fourth century it had attracted the notice of the emperor and eastern bishops. Constantine and Athanasius,³ both surnamed the Great, refer to it. The chronicler, Sulpicius Severus, in his account of an ecclesiastical synod held at Rimini,⁴ notices the poverty of certain British bishops who were unable to travel at their own charges so far as Italy, and in consequence

¹ Bede, i. 4.

² Bede, i. 7.

³ Eus. *Vit. Con.* iii. 19; Athan. *Apol. c. Ari.* i.; *Hist. Ari.* 28. ⁴ 359.

accepted an allowance from the imperial treasury, 'thinking it more righteous to burden the treasury than individuals.'¹ When the effect of rhetorical exaggeration has been discounted, the language of Chrysostom implies that towards the close of this century, the native British as well as their Roman masters constituted a well-appointed church of considerable strength, which the rage for pilgrimages to Palestine, then prevalent elsewhere, appears to have infected.² We hear also as belonging to the same time of a certain Roman official who dwelt at Nemthur, identified with Dumbarton, and who emerges from the obscurity of the period, as the father of the apostle of Ireland, St Patrick. Calpurnius, the official referred to, whose father had been a presbyter, was himself a deacon.

When the legionaries of Rome were finally withdrawn, Christianity had already been allied to the empire for about a century. Their withdrawal has left us almost without further record of the Church in Southern Britain for a lengthened interval, during which its strength seems to have been impaired by doctrinal declension, and then paralysed under the repeated shocks of Pictish and Scottish invasion. But as the light fails us in that quarter, it rises to the north, in the first instance fitfully, in the district partly Pictish but chiefly British, which lay beyond the Solway and embraced Strathclyde; and then

¹ Chron. ii. 41. Gibbon estimates that the British Church might be composed at this time of thirty or forty bishops, with an adequate proportion of inferior clergy. Vol. 4, 134, ch. xxxi.

² Chrys. *quod Chr. sit Deus*, 12; *in princip.* Act iii. 1; and Jerome, *Ep.* lviii. 3.

comparatively clear and steady among the Scots and northern Picts. It is in what is now modern Scotland that the first approaches may be traced, towards an ecclesiastical settlement in this island. While Southern Britain was still under Roman protection, Ninian, a Briton by birth, who had been trained at Rome, was erecting at Whithern, on the western shore of Wigtown Bay, a 'stately church' of stone after the Roman manner (c. 397), from which he and his disciples acted on the Britons of Strathclyde, the mixed race that occupied the Lothians, and the southern Picts of Caledonia beyond the Forth. Candida Casa, or the great monastery of Whithern, became one of the main channels through which the Christian faith passed to Ireland, whence it returned to illumine the west and north of Scotland, in the persons of St Columba and his companions (563). It may also be credited with having given indirectly its famous saint, St Kentigern, or as he is also called, St Mungo, their contemporary, to Strathclyde. Between and the arrival in Kent of the Romish monk, Augustine (597), a full generation was yet to intervene. All these great missionaries were monks. The passion for a monastic life had spread by this time to the extreme West, and the institution embodied the better part of the enthusiasm of Christendom. Their mode of procedure in effecting a settlement having many points in common, that which prevailed in the Columban Church, which was destined to be the national church of the Scots and Picts in Scotland for a hundred and fifty years, may be considered typical. As introducing a mode of life

rather than a creed, their first necessity was a home or fixed abode, where their particular manner of life might be followed with some prospect of security and freedom from interference. Their preference for islands, as at Iona and Lindisfarne, or for a piece of land partially surrounded by a river or the sea, as at old Melrose and Coldingham, and in innumerable other instances, was therefore natural. For similar reasons, inland strengths or fortified places offered great attractions. Requisite grants of territory were obtained on various considerations, from the great men of the district or tribe, and in return spiritual services were looked for, or specially imposed. In some instances they were purchased for money; in others they were thrust on a reluctant brotherhood by the pious zeal of the donor. As a rule, they were exempted from military service and other dues. Conversion to Christianity, recovery from sickness, vows in anticipation of battle or thanksgivings for victory, and the assumption of the monastic habit, were among the occasions on which pecuniary gifts were made, and grants of land tendered 'wherein earthly warfare should cease.' These donations were regarded both by giver and receiver as having been immolated or solemnly offered as a sacrifice to God. Iona was thus made over to Columba. On the conversion of the Pictish king, additional cessions of territory followed, and became Columban foundations. Happily there is extant an account, in Gaelic, of the earliest of these grants on record, those which were made to the church and monastery of Deer in Buchan, some if not all of which are in so many words exempted

from all burdens or exactions, and are immolated to God and the patron saint from beginning to end, in freedom from mormaer and toisech, the chief men of the district and tribe, 'to the day of judgment.'¹ In the Columban Church, however, these possessions were in no sense alienated from the tribe by whose rulers or representatives they had been disposed, when the saint or cleric to whom they were gifted for religious uses, was himself a member of the tribe. In that case they continued as a possession in the tribe, as well as for its benefit; and his successor was elected from among its members. When, on the other hand, the saint was of another tribe, both the right and obligation to supply a successor belonged to it, and the appointment was made, if possible, from its own members. Hence the head or abbot of one of those old Columban monasteries stood towards it in the twofold relation of spiritual

¹The earliest of these notices is as follows: 'Columcille and Drostan, son of Cosgrach, his pupil, came from I (Iona) as God had shown to them unto Abbordoboir (Aberdour) and Bede, the Pict was Mormaer of Buchan before them, and it was he that gave them that town in freedom for ever from Mormaer and Tosech. They came after that to the other town, and it was pleasing to Columcille, because it was full of God's grace, and he asked of the Mormaer, to wit Bede, that he should give it to him; and he did not give it; and a certain son of his took an illness after (or in consequence of) refusing the clerics, and he was nearly dead (lit. he was dead but if it were a little). After this the Mormaer went to entreat the clerics that they should make prayer for the son that health should come to him, and he gave in offering to them from Cloch in tiprat to Cloch pette mic Garnait.'—*Book of Deer*, edited by John Stuart, LL.D., for the Spalding Club, p. 91. Compare 'Cloch pette mic Garnait,' the stone of the portion of the son of Garnait, in the above extract with Joshua, xviii. 17: 'and it (the boundary) went down to the stone of Bohan, the son of Reuben.'

chief and secular trustee. As a natural consequence, he became in course of time and for the most part a secular governor; who discharged by proxy the sacred functions which had originally imparted status and influence to his office. When once a monastic establishment had been formed, the claims which were put forward by the church were such as had long since been conceded elsewhere; the right, namely, to exact tithes, first-fruits, and the observance of Sunday, that time as well as property might render its due tribute to religion. Its duty, in return, was to render the ministrations of the Christian faith; among others, the recital of the Holy Scriptures, to all who would hear and obey the truth. It bore to a large extent the character of a Christian settlement peculiarly devoted to religion, and practically exemplifying the perfect life in the midst of a pagan population.¹ Besides the appeal which it made to the higher motives, it recruited its ranks by means of the more tangible attractions of peaceful avocations with security of life and goods, the hope of freedom for the slave and the culture of letters for such as aspired to learning, all which might be found within its precincts. So far were these institutions from being mere churches, that they presented in miniature the life of a well-ordered community, with an exhibition of the working of its various departments reduced to practice. The brethren were fishermen, mechanics, farmers, schoolmasters, and ministers of religion; but the halo of a spiritual

¹ For a detailed account of these institutions, see Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, vol. ii. 63 ff.

calling rested on all these avocations of theirs, and, supported by the regularity of life and moral earnestness of the workers, conferred a character of supernatural sanctity on a monastic community. The influence of these monastic families appears to have spread, both among the Anglo-Saxons and the Scots and Picts, with astounding rapidity. As seminaries counting their scores and hundreds of pupils, they soon had emissaries, well-wishers or defenders in every household. Their beneficence drew to them the hopes and sympathy of the oppressed. Nor were they slow to exercise 'the authority that becomes a priest in reproving the haughty and powerful.' To this must be added the universal belief, with the origin of which we are not now concerned, that miraculous powers had signally attested the divine mission of the principal founders and patron saints. Superstition entailed the same awful authority on their relics and shrines, and added to the sanctity with which Christian churches, in common with other sanctuaries, had been invested. They were holy places which had not yet developed abuses under which criminals rather than the innocent were sheltered; and the tendency was to extend the privileged area, till it reached far beyond the Church walls and inclosures.¹ The reputed sanctity of the clergy, their learning—in which, like their kindred and ecclesiastical brethren in Ireland, they excelled—and the potency with which they were believed to wield the powers

¹ That at Applecross is said to have had a radius of six miles on every side of the famous church of St Maelrubhe. Robertson's *Stat. Eccl. Scot.* ii. 262.

of the only true religion, established their influence among all ranks; the weak looked to them for redress, and the powerful solicited their counsels. Its weight and extent can only be inferred. But the monks, who raised their rude cells on the storm-swept isles of the West, or among the rock-bound fastnesses of Central and Northern Scotland, who lived on the coarsest fare, and passed to their nightly rest with the bare ground as their couch, and a stone for a pillow, were, many of them, of noble and kingly race. It touched, indeed, the essence of their office that their mediation should be employed on critical occasions. Columba's own mission to Albyn may have been partly political. He is credited with having secured the recognition by the Picts and Irish of the small Dalriadic, Scottish kingdom, at that time hard bestead. Adamnan, his biographer and a successor in the abbacy, is also credited with political action, and is reported to have been the author of a measure which, for the first time, exempted Scottish women, whether of Erin or of Albyn, from military service. It was in the character of one who had a hand in founding the kingdom, as well as of a minister of religion, that Columba instituted or ordained Aidan to be king (574), and blessed, with hand solemnly laid upon his head. The so-called coronation of Aidan—there is no mention of a crown—is one of the earliest on record in Western Europe; marks the point at which the Church had laid its hand, together with its sanction, on the tribal and national life north of the Forth and Clyde; and fitly symbolises the union of the spiritual and

temporal power among a primitive people. No similar record refers to England for a century later ; but thenceforward these ideas were still further elaborated, in the administration of unction to the kings of Anglo-Saxon race. When its founder died, the Columban Church had largely taken in hand the spiritual guidance of the Picts and Scots, and, in the following century, of the Northumbrians (634-64), under the auspices of their sovereign Oswald and its own St Aidan.

The expulsion from Pictish Caledonia of the Columban clergy (717) marks the beginning of the decay and downfall of their Church. It had parted early, in the old days of the Roman occupation of Britain, from the main stream of ecclesiastical development in the West, and when Rome sent out her spiritual soldiers to recover the ground which the legions had evacuated, they introduced a system with which it was at variance. The day on which Easter ought to be observed, and the style of the clerical tonsure, were among the chief points of disagreement ; but these had acquired an importance, which a people that knows nothing of the one, and does not observe the other, must find it difficult to appreciate. In the collision that ensued, the Columban clergy defended their traditional usages with a tenacity which brought on them from the highest ecclesiastical quarters the taunt, 'not to think their small number, placed on the utmost border of the earth, wiser than all the ancient and modern churches of Christ throughout the world ;' but they were overwhelmed. The Pictish king, having thrown in his lot with Rome,

expelled them from his dominions, having first taken the precaution of placing his kingdom under the patronage of St Peter, who afterwards made way for St Andrew. A change of clergy over all Pictland opened a way for the more direct interference of the bishop of Rome, to whom and whose system their successors were affiliated. This has been represented in transmission as the result of an intelligent conversion to orthodoxy, but may be traced partly to political considerations. The legends that surround the early history of St Andrews point to large donations by later Pictish kings; a tenth part of the royal inheritance, and even a third of the kingdom, being considered appropriate gifts, on its promotion to the primacy among Pictish churches, which had been temporarily held by Dunkeld, and for founding abbeys throughout the kingdom. Grants of land ranging over a wide tract of territory, from Largo to Castleton of Braemar, are also specified, while a vast parish or parochial district is described as having been attached to it. Whatever faith may be due to these traditions, it is more certain that the secularisation of church lands, to which the Columban system offered strong temptations, now went on apace. There were, however, two simultaneous processes, the seizure of the old Columban endowments by abbots who had ceased to be abbots except in name, and the bestowal of fresh gifts on the reorganised Church—the ‘Scottish Church,’ as it shortly afterwards became, on the accession of the race of Kenneth Macalpin to the Pictish throne. Powerful families originated in the

lay abbots, who now appropriated the gifts which the piety of former generations had laid on the altar for the maintenance of a national religion. The titular head of the abbey of Glendochart ranked by-and-by as a great lord, whose jurisdiction penetrated into Argyll; the successor of Maelrubhe at Applecross developed into the Earl of Ross; while the presbyter-abbot of Dunkeld became progenitor of the royal line that began with Malcolm Canmore. A distribution among lay lords of a part of the jurisdiction, patronage, and other privileges of the Church accompanied this usurpation, and contributed to the process by which the Scottish Church was fully assimilated to the Roman Catholic system of the middle ages, from the time of St Margaret (1069) to the Reformation.

During this period a territorial Church, with its parishes, parochial clergy, and episcopal supervision, entirely supplanted the old arrangements, by which religious services were provided from monastic centres. The various religious orders of the Continent were introduced, and as the great monasteries of the period were founded on the continental and English model, the Culdees, the last relics of the ancient system, were absorbed. The three bishoprics which were in existence when David I. began his reign (1124-53), had increased to nine at his death. The munificent gifts of the period were now ratified by the pope—a sign of the complete unification of the Scottish Church, which now extended to the Tweed, with the system of which Rome was the acknowledged head. Whereas gifts of books, vestments, and sacred vessels for the

altar were among the earliest proofs of his interest in the ecclesiastical affairs of Britain, his relation to the Church, both in England and Scotland, had now become one of judicial authority. The Church of the whole West, in the plenitude of its power, necessarily added to the credit of its component parts. From the time when Turgot of Durham was appointed to the see of St Andrews, the Scottish bishops were cosmopolitan; and the head to which they owed supreme allegiance was neither at St Andrews nor York, but at Rome. The reduction of the Church in Britain, north and south of the Tweed, to a uniform system, had sown the seeds of quarrel between the Scottish Church and the see of York, which had exercised jurisdiction in Galloway, and sought to establish itself in the primacy of the whole of Scotland; but the papal bull of Pope Clement III. addressed to William the Lion (1188) confirmed the independence of the Church of Scotland, and declared it to be 'by special grace the daughter of Rome.' At this time education was entirely in its hands; the administration of law was largely the business of its courts. The privacy of domestic life confided its secrets to its ear. It gave its sanction to the most solemn engagements and relationships, or withheld it on its own terms. In virtue of its enormous wealth, it overshadowed the temporal estates, and aided by substantial subsidies the policy which it recommended. Its dignitaries were, at times, powerful ministers of the crown, and dictated its policy. In England, strenuous efforts had been made since the time of Edward I., to restrain the encroachments of the papacy, which

had gained a technical hold over it, through its claim to a suzerainty founded on the homage of King John. But it is significant that, in spite of the strong limitary statutes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the determination of king and parliament to stay the growing absorption of the soil of England by the Church, the following century saw a cardinal installed in a height of power and influence, to which few of the most trusted ministers of the English crown had attained. Nor was it otherwise in Scotland, where another cardinal, Beaton, whose fate was still more tragic than that of Wolsey, exercised an unrivalled influence. The Church in both countries had at length attained to a position in which it discharged numerous and important functions that properly belonged to the State. But it would be a feeble and one-sided rendering of historical facts, that traced this to the ambition and intrigues of a sacerdotal caste who played on the fears of the superstitious multitude; or to a league between the temporal and spiritual power, to uphold despotic rule. Pre-eminent services alone confer a long-continued ascendancy over the intelligence and conscience of mankind. Had the mediæval Church not been, on great occasions, the exponent of the conscience of Christendom, and the sole power that dared to champion purity and righteousness, before the licentious and brutal tyranny of the strong, it never had attained to a position in which it, in its turn, oppressed the conscience, fettered the legitimate action of the State, and, tempted by lust of power, confounded spheres of jurisdiction which are in the main distinct.

With the Reformation came the next great readjustment of their relations. Far-reaching as were the changes which it introduced, the practical organisation and beliefs which had been inherited from the past were recast in accordance with the ideas and altered conditions of the times, rather than exchanged for entirely new principles and methods. Much of the ancient spirit outlived the destruction of the old institutions, to be re-embodied in the new. A prominent feature in the endeavour to remodel the ecclesiastical constitution was the exclusion, by statute, of the papal authority from all legal status, influence, and possibility of interference in the realm, with corollary penal clauses directed against the Roman Catholics. This extraneous element having been got rid of, and the disposal of the patrimony of the Church having been reduced to the dimensions of a purely Scottish question, the nation or its rulers proceeded to arrange for the continuance of a national church and recognition of religion. No other alternative had yet been heard of. There was the possibility, and it was hoped by many, that when all prior interests should have been fairly met, there might be a redistribution of the ample revenues to be dealt with, on certain public and patriotic lines that contemplated an adequate provision for the future ministers of religion, the encouragement of the higher learning, the endowment of schools, and the maintenance of the poor. But the magnificent projects that floated before the imagination of enthusiastic reformers and the unselfish of all classes, vanished like a dream. How to dispose of the church lands and revenues was, at best, a

problem to tax all the resources of statesmanship, sustained by the full strength of a disinterested public opinion. It was not clear what the final settlement of the religious question might be, and the number of the ministers for whom immediate provision must be made was comparatively small. Taken together, the public claimants were numerous, but there was a still larger body of expectants who had destined themselves to be the chief beneficiaries, in the House with which the decision lay. Beyond a severance of the ecclesiastical endowments from the papal authority, which had hitherto enjoyed the lion's share in their disposal, parliament at first declined to go. It drew the limit of its action with a skill and caution that cast a dubious light on its views regarding the ultimate destination of a heritage so vast, and so full of seductive possibilities. It does not conflict with this statement, that the proposal which was adopted allowed the clergy of the old *régime* to retain for life, two-thirds of their revenues; for it was manifestly desirable to postpone the final settlement. It being thought good to subject the remaining third to further subdivision, two-thirds of it were set apart towards a restoration of the dilapidated resources of the crown, while one-third (£24,231 Scots, or £2,019, 5s. sterling), or a ninth part of the whole—in fact less, for the returns had been under value—was devoted to the re-endowment of a national church. Many of the temporal lands of the great abbeys and other religious houses had already, in the confusion of the times, found their way, by devious courses and devices, into the hands of impoverished nobles. The remainder, nominally

reverting to the crown, were afterwards squandered on commendators or lay occupants of benefices, the so-called Lords of Erection, or on court favourites and pensionaries, or filched away under the disguise of long leases, feus and sales, of merely nominal valuations, such as the ingenuity of the conveyancers of the day could contrive ; and some were forcibly seized. There continued, however, in the crown the reversion of the lands and revenues which the old clergy had been allowed to retain. In 1617, in view of the fact that many parishes were without ministers, and that many of the latter were miserably poor, the precarious provision derived from the common fund of the 'thirds,' which was often irregularly paid, and sometimes not at all, was constituted a burden on the teinds or tithes of each separate parish. Some years later, Charles I. meditated a reduction of the grants which had been made by his father, out of the ecclesiastical domains, but succeeded only in arranging a compromise. 'Decrees arbitral,' pronounced by the king, provided that the teinds should be valued and sold to such proprietors of the soil as were not in possession of them, and who might wish to purchase. So far, the object was to avoid the conflict of rights which arose when one man was proprietor of the tithes of the harvest, and another was proprietor of the harvest itself. It was an instance of compulsory sale for the public good, the price being regulated by a fixed standard. On this footing, with the right to claim from the Court of Teinds a review of the adequacy of the stipend every twenty years, the provision made

for the clergy of the ecclesiastical establishment in Scotland substantially remains. It had in some parishes fallen so low that, in 1810, the Exchequer was empowered to pay an annual sum, afterwards increased to £12,000, towards an augmentation of these livings, in order to bring them up to £150 a year. Still later Acts erected certain churches in the Highlands and Islands, and endowed them with a meagre stipend; the total annual grant from the Consolidated Fund amounting to about £17,000, for both of these objects. And as is well known, between three hundred and forty, and three hundred and fifty, parishes have since then been erected and endowed by the liberality of friends and members of the Church; it is true, with an annual income in most cases of only £120. To retrace our steps somewhat, in 1647 the Westminster Confession, which had been substituted by the Church for the old Scottish Confession of Knox and of 1560, under the pressure of a desire for uniformity with the Puritans, became, and has since continued to be, the doctrinal standard of the National Church. By this symbol it is bound, but itself has imposed the formula by which office-bearers accept it on their entrance to office; and were it desirable, the same authority might modify or remove it. Its parochial and judicial machinery, early set in motion, has outlived the struggles and changes of three centuries, is secured in its independence by statute, and has proved its adaptability to the wants of a more modern age. The harsh and rigid discipline which was at one time meted out to all classes is to be explained by

the circumstances; and although there have been occasional interferences with matters extraneous to its proper sphere, the Church of the Reformation can hardly be charged with having grasped at political power, or sought to discharge secular functions. It is a remarkable proof of the foresight of its early leaders, that almost the only considerable exercise of public duty which it had long discharged, but of which it has been deprived, has been the supervision of education. On the other hand, it has obtained from the Legislature the restitution of an ancient privilege, in the abolition of patronage, the main cause and fertile source of Presbyterian division. The regulation of its forms of worship, and of the celebration of divine ordinances, is acknowledged to be within its own competency. Its procedure in admitting to office, and in the exercise of discipline, has settled down into forms which the civil law fully sustains. Within its sphere, it performs legislative as well as judicial functions, with a right as indefeasible as can be shown to belong to any other lawful tribunal. While its right to meet in General Assembly has never been lost sight of, it has always had respect to ancient usage and example, and reserved a place of honour for the sovereign, or the representative of the crown in its councils. Throughout its history, it has sought for a middle term between license and absolutism, anarchy and a hierarchy; between a total abstention from political movement, or the currents of national life, on the one hand, and on the other, that immersion in the political caldron, which would seem to be an intermittent

necessity of denominational existence. The slender patrimony which it has inherited secures the independence of its ministers, while the terms of service on which it can be enjoyed ought to exclude envy. There are grounds, no doubt, on which its present position has been challenged, but where these do not affect the characteristic principle of a State Church, they have not been reduced to that definiteness of statement which might render them a basis of legislation. It is an institution whose position is the result of a long and troubled, but not inglorious, history; which has contributed, by its deeds and sufferings, much of the colour and glow of feeling that pervade the national record; and in which the aspirations of many of the noblest minds of Scottish origin have been realised. With all its imperfections, it has long had a strong and loving hold on the national heart and conscience; it has impressed its spirit on the national character, and transmitted its likeness to those of its own offspring who refrain from using its ministrations.

Few subjects of great moment, yet of lively interest, have the advantage of so long and continuous a series of records for their elucidation. An interval of a thousand years separates the Reformation from the missionary enterprise of Columba—a vast stretch of time, even in the history of nations. During the greater portion, the main features and general position of the subject stand boldly out. All on the hither side is within the narrative of comparatively modern history. What lies beyond, far distant, is still discernible. Foremost among

facts which the shortest survey must disclose, is the survival, nay, steadfast growth of the Church for nearly three hundred years, in spite of neglect, discouragement, and the energetic, and sometimes furious hostility of the secular power. From that fact, all who are not of opinion that religion has no future as a great factor in determining the course of human affairs, may draw, as from the final, positive conclusion of a great world-debate, the spirit by which they ought to be animated. The religion and life that outlived social ostracism, the demands of Christian discipline, and the persecutions of Nero, Decius, and Diocletian, is not now in imminent peril from causes extraneous to itself. The unconscious exaggerations of party feeling or strong conviction, can alone involve the subject in a phraseology that predicts, in certain eventualities, either the destruction of religion or its signal triumph. Grave issues are, in truth, before us; nor may it be easy for the most disinterested and capable, even when the desire is present, to see in the same light, and be of one mind. The question of the relation of the Church to the State is far-reaching and momentous; civil liberty, as well as religion, may profit by its discussion; but it is not a question of the existence or continuance of religion in the land. In view of that fact, granting that there be sincerity of purpose, there can be no ground, and no excuse, for indulging in intemperate methods of controversy, or raising issues larger than are at stake; and when there is a presumption that the question is not free from difficulty, there is a plain obligation to attribute

no motives other than are wholly disinterested and honourable.

The fact, which no other subject brings more impressively to view, that toleration is of comparatively recent growth, ought of itself to enforce this duty. History does not support the contention, that intolerance and persecution are exclusively, or necessarily, the progeny of a union between religion and the State. The early Christians, it is true, demanded justice merely, from the government, but a change of circumstances led to an altered disposition, even before they enjoyed the right to call on the executive to enforce their creed. The persecution of heretics could hardly have originated, till theology had assumed the dogmatic forms of the fourth century; nor till then, did the great church doctors justify the compulsory reclamation of heretics, with its dark and ominous alternative. The first of them to suffer death as victims of orthodoxy, were, no doubt, got at through the Church's alliance with the State, but a direct alliance is not the only channel, through which governments are influenced by powerful interests and corporations; and the worst times of all were those when, in certain countries, the Church had arrogated to itself the functions of the temporal and spiritual jurisdictions, and there was virtually no State, and no restraining, moderating force such as it has frequently exerted. What the facts point to is, that toleration is a spirit, rather than a set of principles; a broad, humane disposition, the growth of secular and religious tendencies in combination; which flourishes most, when men's

interests are large and various, and regarded with some sense of perspective and proportion; and least, when thought and feeling are concentrated on a single point, with which there is nothing to measure or compare.

Dispassionate authors who are opposed to a formal union between religion and the State, frankly admit that there is nothing intrinsically wrong, in Christianity allying itself with secular government, more than with art, or education, or anything else that is secular and at the same time good. Nor, indeed, is it possible for it to exist, without some kind and degree of connection with the civil authority; even the definition of the Church as an invisible body leaves to it a visible and corporal existence. If there be modes of religion as remote from national life as a metaphysical problem, Christianity is not one of them. The vast interests of mankind are the material in which it works. As a vital and regenerating force in humanity, it was impossible for it to be for ever content with its primitive position of servitude and neglect. Seed and leaven, similitudes employed by its Author, point to a growth and expansion commensurate with its nature; nor, short of that, is there any limit at which it can consistently, and with justice to its own pretensions, cease to influence human thought, morality, and legislation. There is one conclusion that covers the whole era, that Christianity owes its diffusion among nations, and its elevation to the rank of a great moral and social force among them, to its own essential and native vigour. Nurtured in silence and darkness, amid

the cold and biting winds of neglect, and the storms and tempests of persecution, it sent abroad its roots with a strong hold on the deeper, inner life of humanity, as it shot upwards into recognition and power. Whether craving protection from the State, or allying itself with it, or endeavouring to control it, its firm belief was, from first to last, that it was legitimately promoting its high destiny. A conviction that pervades the whole history of the Church, and is rooted in the nature of Christianity itself, cannot fairly be put in the category of mere arbitrary compacts. There are on the face of that history concordats without number, with reference to matters both of principle and detail, but they arise out of mutual relations, that, as a whole, were not the result of contract, but of natural or providential growth. If due weight be given to this consideration, what may be described as the preponderating, lay verdict may continue to be what it has been in the past, that after all, it comes to be a question of a *modus vivendi*, which means, in its lowest form, how the secular authority and the religious are to get along together, with least friction—but which ought to mean, how they are best to sustain each other in spheres that are practically distinct, and fairly separable; to work to each other's hands, in a noble emulation, and with the high aim of securing its full strength and happiness to national life. The only other alternatives may be left to take care of each other; they who anticipate that religion may become a department of secular government, are not more than a counterpoise to

those who are still more eager to see the State reduced to a department of the Church.

Certain vague charges against a union between them may be dismissed with a bare enumeration: that the Church, if it thereby gain in numbers and become the church of the masses, becomes the church of the world; that Christianity becomes a fashion, and that consequently hypocrisy is increased, and moral discipline relaxed. Might the same accusations not be made with an amount of truth, on which all parties may reflect with pain, against any form of Christianity that has become the dominant religion in any land? Candour will admit that these evils are rife in countries where a State-church cannot be brought forward in explanation; and that even religion has its parasites. When stripped of technicalities such as 'spiritual independence,' 'crown and covenant rights,' and similar phraseology, the practical outcome of the belief that underlies these and all similar accusations probably is, that a union between religion and the State naturally leads to the Church being secularised; to its being worldly-minded, and much mixed up with political and other worldly matters. This, as a belief of considerable currency, merits serious attention. The general consideration may come, however, here into view, and it would seem to be self-evident, that if some other institution or body does not relieve the Church, in whole or in part, of the worldly business which is necessary to its existence, it must do it for itself. There need be nothing wrong in that; the practical question is, whether it be, on the whole, the better way to preserve a sacred institution from

being secularised ; and it is not self-evident, that the most efficient mode of preventing that result is to forbid another party to take on itself the main portion of the work, and to load the Church itself, as a corporation, with every conceivable worldly transaction and concern. There was a time, no doubt, when the Church was obliged to do its own farming and banking, and when it transacted all the business that its ever-increasing staff and growing numbers rendered necessary ; even when the law did not allow it to act in a corporate capacity. There was a still earlier period, when there was a community of goods, but then the fact at once emerged, that to have all things in common meant the corporate management by the Church of worldly possessions, and, so far its secularisation. The natural remedy in the circumstances, the conversion of most of these possessions into money, was adopted ; but even that did not prevent the very apostles from being burdened with semi-secular business, until relieved of it on their own protest ; nor is there reason to suppose that the experiment of a community of goods was abandoned on any other ground, than that it was practically a failure.

In the brief survey in which we have been engaged, three distinct periods, with their characteristic features, have been passed in review. There is the Columban period, with its groups of monastic institutions, whose spiritual chiefs united in their own persons large temporal authority with spiritual supremacy. A main object of the system was, to be as far removed from the secular arm as possible, free from military service or taxation

generally ; and to manage its own affairs, as a group of independent communities. There were weak points and strong in the arrangement, but we have seen how, as a general result, it led deeper and deeper into every kind of secular undertaking and employment, until the principal abbots became for the most part lay rulers, and ultimately set up as great, lay lords of the soil, abstracting for their own use the major part of the ecclesiastical heritage. That period was followed by another, of great obscurity till it clearly worked up to the mediæval Church, which had by that time been drawn into the closest connection with the whole organisation of secular government, and was fostered by it with considerate and loving care. In this, there was at first neither real nor apparent danger. But there were new conditions. The religious system of Scotland was now a branch of the great international organisation of the West, with its central, governing intelligence and will. There arose what proved to be the irresistible temptation to exchange legitimate influence for supremacy, and the virtual appropriation of almost every department of State. By an opposite course to that pursued by the Columban abbots, the great dignitaries of the mediæval Church came, in their turn, to be engrossed with temporal affairs.

These last, no doubt, were results that had been arrived at, under a system of intimate union between religion and the State. But, it was against these enormities, whether in Scotland, England, or on the Continent, that the Protestantism of Europe roused itself to undertake a hazardous and arduous conflict.

The expulsion of the papal authority from English soil assumed, more than in Scotland, the character of a struggle between a home and a foreign power, for if the monarchy was stronger than in Scotland, it was exposed to greater danger; and the Church of England still shows how deeply this character was impressed on it, in the assertion of the ecclesiastical supremacy of the sovereign. The policy of the Scottish Reformers, on the other hand, was more strongly inspired than elsewhere by the desire to reduce the activity of the Church to its true proportions, and, if possible, to indicate by broad and clear lines of demarcation the spheres of both Church and State. At the same time, worthier ideas were abroad, than had long prevailed regarding the province and duties of the State, just as men's minds were also being directed to the possibilities of large and exciting enterprise, by the startling discoveries of science and geography. Whether our forefathers entirely succeeded with their theory of a co-ordinate jurisdiction, is not the point, but that they strove to solve the question, in the belief that it must be solved on the principle of mutual co-operation, rather than of mutual exclusion. Independence without tyranny on either side, and interdependence without absorption, was the middle course which they strove to realise, as being most in harmony with the divine law, and most conducive to the welfare of the kingdom; and for this, the only footing on which, as they believed, the freedom and integrity of civil government and the security of religion could be permanently maintained, they contended stoutly, and at times fiercely, to the

sacrifice in its defence of both life and goods. What may fairly be called the national, Scottish view, that which governed the action of all the greatest names among Scottish churchmen, from Knox to Chalmers and Macleod, was that the co-operation of the State in reality secured the de-secularisation of the Church ; that it left the ministers of religion greater freedom to wait on their proper duties, and greater independence in discharging them ; and that definite positions having been taken up on either side with their respective obligations, the current of national life ought to move with greater strength, smoothness, and purity. This may or may not be an instance of that common-sense with which Scotland is at once credited as an excellent gift, and twitted as the average or mediocrity beyond which it is unable to rise ; but it has been a characteristically Scottish way of regarding a complicated and difficult question. It was come to by men whose lot was cast in times and circumstances that pressed for its practical solution, and who were singularly able to grasp with firmness the higher religious aspect of the question, that a nation is as much a divine organism as an individual, as absolutely under divine law and discipline, and therefore bound to acknowledge, and appeal to, the Supreme Power and Judge ; and history so far supports this view, inasmuch as nations have in the past regarded religion as one of their weightiest concerns, while such communities as in modern times would rid them of all religious obligations have not succeeded. Questions of the kind, in the long-run, settle themselves, but not till they have been exhausted on every side,

when, indeed, they may become as dead as those Easter controversies that at one time agitated Christendom to its depths, and are now forgotten. But neither the condition of stable equilibrium nor of indifference has yet been reached on this subject; it does not advance the argument to appeal to countries whose experience offers scarce one parallel to ours; nor is it possible to say what further developments may be in store for those younger nations, whose greatness already looms on the horizon in gigantic outlines. There are possible dangers on either side; it is as undesirable that the State should meddle overmuch in religion as in social and private life; but the question has been worked out and tested in Scotland as in few other countries, in the course of its own chequered history and experience. It is a national question, and the people of Scotland understand it. They know that it touches their civil liberty, and the independence of their clergy, and that the interests of their children's children are deeply concerned in it. They cannot construe any attempt to snatch from them an opportunity of determining whether the relation between religion and State shall continue on the old lines, and whether there shall be as in the past a national recognition of religion, but as a sign of want of confidence in the wisdom and righteousness of a cause, and of mistrust of the capacity and judgment of the people. It is their right calmly and deliberately to decide it, and if they do not belie the best traditions of their history, they will deal with it in a practical and temperate spirit.



ST GILES' LECTURES.

SIXTH SERIES—THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

LECTURE II.

NATIONAL RELIGION IN THEORY AND FACT.

By the VERY REV. JOHN TULLOCH, D.D., LL.D., Principal of the University of St Andrews, Dean of the Order of the Thistle, and one of Her Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland.



IN the first lecture of this course, the ancient relation of Church and State has been traced in its origin and history. It has been shown how the relation sprang up naturally by essential affinity between the spiritual and civil orders. The higher ideas introduced by the Gospel gradually supplanted the pagan ideas of law and government, first in the Roman Empire, and then in the new nationalities which rose upon its ruins. The Church incorporated itself with the State everywhere, not by any formal agreement, but as its formative life and main power. So far from being instituted by Government, it would be more true in many cases to say that the civil order was largely the creation of religious faith and enthusiasm. As

the European kingdoms became more and more under the influence of Christian principles, they embodied them more completely, and were more fashioned according to their type. National churches were, in short, everywhere natural growths. The connection of Church and State, so far from being an artificial connection appointed by kings or parliaments—the mere product of statute—is a connection arising out of the nature of things, and spontaneously evolved with the advance of European civilisation.

It may be true, as in the case of our own Church of Scotland, that the ancient connection between Church and State became the subject of special statute; that the national religion, in passing from one form to another, was defined and guaranteed by positive enactment; but this does not affect our general statement. For in such a case, not only was there a long previous growth of church life, but the change to a reformed type of that life came primarily from within, and not from without the national development. No history can illustrate more strongly than our own how utterly futile it is to attempt artificially to impose upon a people a form of national religion alien to their feelings. The Church of Scotland, as it now exists, is no doubt, in its civil rights and privileges, a parliamentary institution. The act of the first Scottish parliament of William and Mary, in the spring of 1690 (April 25), established the Presbyterian creed, church government, and discipline. In other words, it established and ratified, in its present form, the Church of Scotland. But not only was the reformed

church already in existence as the religion of the people, but the reformed church itself was only a new outcome of Scottish religious faith, which, from the beginning, had been one of the most powerful elements of the national civilisation. At no period of Scottish history, many as are its transformations, can religion be said to have been formally adopted by the government and set up for its own purposes. The conception of the State choosing one religion from among others, and endowing it to the injury of others, is a purely modern conception. It has no ground in history or in fact. Nations in the past have grown strong in virtue of their religious life and organisation; and churches have grown wise and great, not merely because they were religious, but national institutions, at once endowed with spiritual life, and regulated by common national law and usage.

To every well-informed mind, therefore, the alliance between Church and State, whatever may be now said about it, is a natural alliance. They have united according to the nature of each, the State deriving strength and stability from the Church, which is merely the organisation of its higher life, and the church receiving support, control, and direction from the State. They have been reared together with the course of civilisation, the twin expressions of its highest ideas. So far, this alliance must always justify itself to the historical student. He inclines to believe that what history has thus joined together should not be rashly put asunder. National religion is to him a reality, not merely because it seems logically to follow that the religious principle must extend

from the individual to the family, and from the family to the State, which is the aggregate of the social life of a people, but because he finds national churches among all Christian peoples who have a history beyond modern times.

It will be said that modern nationalities, such as America and our British colonies, present a different picture. They do so; and the fact deserves, if not all the importance attached to it, to be carefully weighed. The United States of America is no doubt a great nationality without any national church or national religion in the historical sense. That the people of the United States are, notwithstanding, a religious people, with churches multiplied throughout their bounds, and a spirit of religious earnestness pervading them, may be frankly conceded. We need not dwell upon what can yet be amply established, that in the older colonial states there are still survivals of an earlier condition of things, when religion was recognised and endowed as in the old country; nor need we dwell upon the very unequal distribution of religious ordinances where all is left to the casual action of voluntary liberality. Let the fullest admission be given to whatever can be said in favour of religion in America. It does not in the least follow, because the American people, and the people of our colonies, thrive religiously as well as otherwise without a national church, that other civilisations will thrive equally if their national churches are taken away. Because new types of civilisation have sprung up in new circumstances, it by no means follows that the

older types are to be violently accommodated to the new, or that they can be so without fatal injury. To apply modern ideas to the violent change or destruction of older forms of nationality, implies a process of dislocation which may disturb the older civilisation to its very roots. Unhappily, the modern Democrat is seldom or never an historical student—quite as little as the old Tory was, who thought the Church existed for his glory, and that the poor might learn to touch their caps to him at its doors. The existence of our national churches, as they have grown with the growth of the country, or been modified, as they have no doubt largely been, by the progress of civil and religious liberty, is ignored by both alike. And whereas in former days the Church was looked upon in many cases as a mere addendum to the squirearchy of the period, so in these days it has come to be looked upon as merely a favoured sect chosen by the Government, although, in reality, the representative of its common religious life.

II. This point is so important, and so commonly ignored in discussion, that we must dwell upon it a little further. The Church of England is historically a part of the common national life—an estate of the realm coeval with the realm itself. In early British and Anglo-Saxon times she established herself by her own divine strength and Christian activities in the same manner as all the early Christian churches, receiving only such protection from the State and its laws as any other lawful institution of which the

State approved.¹ There exists no act formally establishing her. It might be more truly stated, as it has been stated, that the Church of England, which is found fully organised long before Magna Charta, and is recognised in that famous document in all her rights and privileges, instead of being established by the State, contributed to the establishing of the State. No doubt, in course of time, the Church of England became the subject of statute, as well as every other institution in the realm; but this did not make her the creature of the State, nor did it constitute any act of selection on the part of the State on her behalf, to the prejudice of other religious interests. There was not, indeed, till after the great constitutional struggle of the seventeenth century, any other religious body in England in comparison with which the Church of England could have been preferred.

The case of our own Church, as we have seen, is different. Presbytery may be said to have been preferred to Episcopacy at the Revolution. The modern Church of Scotland rests on the Revolution Settlement; and it is open for any one to say that she was then selected in preference to the Episcopal Church of the Restoration. But, truly speaking, the Church Settlement of 1690 was, as it professed to

¹ We have no incorporating or endowing Statutes. The (Anglican) Church Establishment, whatever it means, dates from the infancy of Christianity under the Heptarchy. It has grown with the monarchy and the constitutions, of which it is the oldest element. Hence the difficulty of defining the disestablishment of what was never definitely established. Still, it is easy to enumerate the peculiar relations in which the State stands to the Church, relations not existing with any other religious institution.—Dr TREVOR.

be, the work of the people of Scotland. There is no doubt, says our Scottish historian, Dr Burton, than whom it is impossible to conceive any one on that subject more impartial, that 'the voice of the people' was decidedly for the Presbyterian system. The northern counties were in favour of Episcopacy; and there was a considerable party in the western shires that would tolerate nothing but the Covenant; a majority of the gentry were nominally Episcopalian; but the middle classes and the common people throughout the southern counties determined the result not only by their numbers, but by their intelligence and earnestness. The Settlement, in other words, came from the people, and was not imposed upon the people. The Claim of Right was a popular document; and Prelacy was set aside and Presbyterianism established on the basis of the 'inclinations of the people' of Scotland. In other words, the Church of Scotland took its position in the country—not as representing a favoured sect, chosen from among other sects which did not then exist—but as representing the prevalent type of Scottish religion. If there was any trace of injustice in the Settlement, the injustice was one of which we now hear comparatively nothing. If there are reasons for disturbing that Settlement, they come with the least grace from those who have since made those reasons for themselves. The Church of Scotland remains as at the beginning, an historical institution, based on popular support, which has accumulated, in the course of its nearly two hundred years of existence—notwithstanding violent conflicts within and without—a preponderant measure both of

popular regard and intelligent veneration. The fact that rival Presbyterian churches have grown up, having from various causes seceded from the mother church, and taken a position of their own, may be a good reason for considering the ground of dissension between these churches, and revising, if possible, the old relation of the Church and State; but it is no adequate reason for destroying the mother church, out of which they have grown, and to whose model they are adapted. The primary secession of these churches may, or may not, have been so far justifiable. But so long as the people of Scotland remain preponderantly attached to the old church, and this church upholds the old creed and form of church government, to which the younger and rival churches no less profess adherence, it can be no injustice to maintain an institution so truly representative of the religion of the country. The fact that sections of the population have placed themselves by their own convictions and act outside the ancient shelter, is no reason why the thousands who remain inside the church should be deprived of privileges which have become a national inheritance. If there are those who disclaim the inheritance, yet why should the larger number who are content to share it be deprived of it?

The result of all fair inquiry is to show that national religion is a natural historic growth. It does not come of statecraft, or the invention of priests, or of mere political design. It comes of historical necessity, and it can only, therefore, be viewed rightly, or even intelligently, when

viewed historically. The case is quite unfairly put, when it is put as a case of preference of sect over sect by the State. Because, first of all, as we have seen, it is not such a case. There was not in the beginning, even in Scotland, any arbitrary selection by Government of one sect over another. There was no choice where there was, truly speaking, no alternative, and the people themselves, rather than any government, called the Church into being. But secondly—and to keep ourselves to Scotland—Government have ever since only acknowledged the choice of the people. It has kept its share of the compact, but nothing more. It has of late years at least, so far from favouring the Church, refused all demands for further means of meeting the spiritual destitution of the country, and left it of its own exertion to supplement and largely increase these means, which it has done, so as nearly to add one-third to its parishes. To propose, in such circumstances, to take all its means at once away, because others envy them or will not share them—so far from asserting any principle of religious equality—appears to involve one of the grossest acts of both political and religious injustice ever heard of.

III. As national religion is no mere dogma, but a concrete historical fact, so its full meaning is only realised in the historic sense. It is religion incorporated with and sanctioned by the State. The phrase, National religion, may be used otherwise, as meaning the general religious life of a community, expressed through various churches and

channels. I need not say whether it is properly used in this sense or not, or whether national religion, in any true sense, can exist where there is no alliance with the State. Certainly, it has always been held to imply such an alliance—nothing less than the organisation of the religious side of the nation; its spiritual aspirations and activities, legally embodied, and witnessing, in virtue of this embodiment, to the great thought that religion is not merely a private but a public concern—that it behoves the nation, no less than the individual and the family, to acknowledge God and Christ as the great King and Governor of men in all their relations. It is the recognition and constitutional expression of this principle alone that invests religion with national sanction. It is this which discriminates a national church from a sect, or in other words, any church which has cut itself from the trunk of the national religious sentiment. The sectarian idea often intensifies, but always individualises and narrows religion, and the real secret of the present movement against national churches will be found largely in an intensification of the spirit of religious individualism. Whereas the old idea of religion was eminently ‘common,’ the modern idea has become eminently ‘private,’ and religion is held to be a question for the individual conscience, with which our neighbour citizen has nothing to do. Public life and legislative action are kept aloof from it. Its essential quality is supposed to be a freedom which retreats from all political or legal interference, and which can only be injured by such interference.

This modern reaction has arisen from many causes, which deserve explanation and analysis. We can only in this way understand the mixed character of the movement that is going on around us, and which, by a great authority, is said to be affecting the whole civilised world. Let it be freely granted that there are certain elements of good in this movement. If we interpret Voluntaryism in a purely Christian sense, it is seen to lie at the heart of all religion. There can be no religious conviction which is not the fruit of our own wills drawn by purely spiritual influence to the service of God and of Christ. This is a truism which no Christian would deny. The origin and the power of Christianity come of the divine influence stirring the hearts of men, and leading them individually to God. But it is not more true that the original creative power of religion is voluntary, than it is true that its abiding effects are institutional. The Church everywhere springs up on the foundation of the heart, or rather of many hearts moved by a common inspiration; and as religion cannot live without the voluntary spring out of which it starts, so neither could it live, or be perpetuated, without embodying itself in collective social and national forms. It blends itself inevitably with law and government and social manners, and can no more help doing so, than it can help being the vital and formative power it is, wherever it exists in freshness and force. To suppose, therefore, that this blending of religion and law—of Church and State—necessarily destroys the freedom of religion, or the voluntary pith which originally lies in it, is to convert its very power into a

source of weakness and decay. It makes its triumph, its fall. Abuses no doubt spring up around churches as all other institutions; and national churches may become corrupt in the very pride of their strength, and outlive their utility. That is another question altogether. But to suppose that because religion is primarily individual and voluntary, it cannot enter into connection with the State without losing its essential character, is to contradict not only the facts of history, but the law of historical development, which has united them. Institutions which have sprung up spontaneously with the growth of civilised nations, have only done so because they expressed some real want, and satisfied some true aspiration of the human mind.

There is not only no necessary abridgment of vital piety within the borders of a national religion, but there is a continual quickening and enlargement of the spirit of faith and the ministration of Christlike duty. We shall make no invidious comparisons, nor appeal to any sectarian feelings. We simply state, what every impartial observer, with eyes to see and knowledge to form a judgment, will allow, that the Christian activities of the national churches of England and Scotland will bear comparison with those of any of the churches surrounding them. Nay, so little is there a deadening influence in connection with the State, that State influence, especially in the matter of parochial division, has given an impetus to the spread of religion, where it is most needed, in a manner which no dissenting churches have been able to accomplish. The Gospel has been in this generation

‘preached to the poor’ within the national churches as nowhere else. While prosperous Dissent in our large towns has been gradually removing its centres of worship and of Christian work from the poor and crowded localities to be found in all these towns, these churches have stepped in and taken its place, and prosecuted Christian agencies in a manner which the merely voluntary churches have hardly anywhere attempted.¹ We say this in no spirit of boasting. God knows the national churches of our country should have awakened far earlier than they did to this most urgent work, and done still more than they have done; while our dissenting churches have had a share in the labours of love, and care for the poor, which has happily inspired modern Christianity. But nowhere has the modern spirit of philanthropy—a bright foil to many spots of darkness in our social atmosphere—been realised more vividly or worked out with more intelligent and solid results, than within the two national churches. In no churches do we see a larger vitality or freedom of movement. There have been times, no doubt, when the Christian conscience had sunk low in the country, and Christian activity was comparatively dormant; but there is no reason whatever, but the very contrary, to believe that national churches are peculiarly exposed to stagnation and feebleness. Rather they have a recuperative strength in virtue of their very nationality, and new forces of Christian thought and energy are being constantly set free within them, on a far

¹ See particularly Bishop of Rochester’s Charge.

richer and more powerful scale than within minor and exclusive sects.

Even in so far, therefore, as the modern movement against national churches proceeds from Christian motives—as in religious Nonconformity it no doubt largely does—it is by no means an intelligent movement. It rests, like so many modern political ideas, on a half-truth which, emphasising one side of religion, ignores an equally important side. Exalting the individual in religion, it depresses the Church, and intensifying zeal in narrow forms, it leaves little or no room for the comely growths of spiritual ancestry or the common glory of inspiring tradition.

But the modern current, while so far well motivated, is also largely irreligious. It comes in a large degree of pure negativism or agnosticism; and nothing can be more remarkable than the manner in which its two sides—one intensely religious and the other intensely negative—are seen blending in our day. The one course of the current is certainly quite as strong as the other, and there is no one more likely to be observant of this fact, as there is no one more capable of analysing it, than the great statesman who now again signalises it. Nearly fifty years ago, or in 1838, when he published his volume on *The State in its Relations with the Church*, he had noticed the same mixed character of movement against National Churches. He saw that it was then impelled not merely by the force of Nonconformity, but by 'all the enemies of law, both human and divine' (these words are Mr Gladstone's own). And certainly, if men have learned to look upon

religion nowadays as an illegitimate influence on public affairs, on the ground of its personal sacredness, and as if any contact with the State tended to degrade it rather than elevate the State, there are multitudes of others by whom all definite religion is in itself abhorred, as alien from the functions of common life and work. Theories which exclude the divine from human thought, necessarily cut off religion from government in all its relations. The State is regarded as entirely secular in its constitution and origin, and to be worked without any religious reference whatever. So prevalent is this idea that it has become a commonplace even with many religious people—a commonplace used for political ends, without any clear understanding of the essential principle which lies involved in it, and how far it cuts into the heart of national life. As yet, the principle is only seen in its full development in France, where public or national religion is not only ignored, but contemptuously rejected. It really comes to this, that the State is not only not religious; it is atheistic. Political freedom in its full range cannot consort with any authority, and least of all with any religious authority. It is essentially anarchic; the assertion of every man to do what is right in his own eyes, and to share equally with all others in the common goods of the race. This is the logical result of secularism—the natural and inevitable outcome of the absolute divorce between religion and life—religion and the State.

It is strange how largely the secularist principle has worked itself into modern society, and how

far it is embraced by those who yet shrink from its general application. In a time like ours, general principles, whether good or evil, spread with a wonderful rapidity, and acquire by their mere spread a prestige which gathers as it grows. Of all contemporary features of thought, none is more significant than this contagion of opinion. The old sobriety of temper, the old patience and coolness of analysis, which detected a kind of falsehood rather than of truth in the very generality with which a notion may seize on the popular mind, have given way to a crude enthusiasm which gapes at platitudes and concentrates itself upon popular leaders, hardly more wise than, some of them hardly as wise as, the multitude itself. There is little or no searching of the heart over the most difficult problems of government and religion. All has been neatly packed away in aphorisms which pass current from mouth to mouth. 'Religion is too sacred for politics;' 'the school is to teach secular, and the churches religious instruction;' 'no public funds must go to the teaching of religion in any form;' 'theology, instead of being, as in the old times, the queen of the sciences, is, strictly speaking, not knowledge at all, but only a sort of shadow or imagination of knowledge'—are the sort of sayings one hears everywhere. They mark the rise of that current of Secularism which is inundating the civilised world. Still more significantly than in Mr Gladstone's youth, they come not only from the side of Nonconformity, but from those who are waging war against all religion whatever.¹

¹ Church Principles, p. 15.

It is well to ponder what the sequel of all this will be—a social state without any public acknowledgment of religion, and a type of civilisation radically different from all that has hitherto bred the noblest qualities of our national character. The new forces may develop new elements of national life, and these may have excellences of their kind; but they will not be like the old. Religion cannot be separated from the fibre of our national existence, and placed on one side of it as something essentially apart from it, without injury—it may prove fatal injury—to our old power and greatness. No words can better express this than Mr Gladstone's own in that early work of his from which we have already quoted. Describing our past national welfare, he speaks of the State as having derived its best energies from religion, and looking forward to the dangers which menace it, he adds: 'We may tremble at the very thought of the degradation she would undergo, should she, in an evil hour, repudiate her ancient strength, *the principle of national religion.*'

In the light of these remarks, it is seen that national religion, as hitherto understood, has sprung out of well-defined ideas about religion as a matter of national duty as well as personal concern. It has come from the acknowledgment of God in the family and national conscience no less than in the individual heart. It has been supposed to pervade every phase of life and every act of government. Religion has been felt as a great truth lying at the public heart, which compelled recognition, and made a national church not only a possibility but a necessity. Of necessity, the statesman as a public

man was understood to be religious, and engaged in public and representative acts for the people.¹ The current which has set in against national churches, comes largely from a denial of these old beliefs. There is doubtless much zeal for religion among those who on one side are striving to bring our national churches to an end. But the real impetus to the movement is now, as half a century ago, on the side of irreligion, operating with tremendous effect throughout the civilised world.

We have thus tried to show you what national religion really is—no mere accident or formal institution, which we can manipulate at will, and leave our national life otherwise untouched. It is really a part of that life. It has entered into its growth, and grown with it. It has come from the recognition of common principles about religion as no mere private matter, but a great public concern lying at the root of all society, and alone sustaining and consecrating it. The modern movement against it springs from the decay of these old principles; and while quickened by a certain infusion of religious zeal of a narrow type, is yet mainly enforced by the wave of irreligion which is passing over the modern world. The phenomenon is one, therefore, eminently deserving the attention of statesmen, as of all

¹ 'The statesman,' says Mr Gladstone, must be a worshipping man. His acts are public; the powers and instruments with which he works are public; and 'because public and wholly out of the range of mere individual agency, they must be sanctified not only by the private personal prayer and piety of those who fill public situations, but also in public acts of the men composing the public body.'—*The State in its Relations with the Church*, c. ii.

thinkers. It is far more important than a mere temporary question of politics. It goes to the roots of national well-being, and may well stimulate all the anxieties of national patriotism.

IV. An historical fact so prominent as national religion has, of course, been the subject of various theories. What precisely is the Church, and what the State, and what is the principle of their alliance? It is an advantage of the manner in which we have approached the subject, that we have seen it, as it is, before inquiring after any theory about it. Nothing can be less useful than the attempt to theorise about any phenomenon, before bringing ourselves abreast of its full meaning. We have seen that the connection of Church and State is in no degree a mere conventional or artificial arrangement formulated on one side and accepted on the other. It is everywhere a natural historic growth, out of the circumstances in which the Christian nationalities of Europe have risen. Religion has not been formally instituted by the State. The State has more frequently been formed and organised, or at least influenced, by religion. In our past civilisation they have, to say the least, been composite, growing from the same root, and largely conserving the same ends. This is the view of the relation *as a fact*. Yet strangely, the most extended and popular theory of the relation may be said to rest on a different conception. It presupposes the Church and State as separate powers, that have, so to speak, made a contract with one another, the one laying down conditions, the other

accepting these conditions. This may be called the eighteenth-century theory of the connection of Church and State, analogous to the theory of government prevalent in the same century, which supposed a compact between rulers and people. In neither case is the theory any explanation of the fact. It does not answer or account for the actual phenomenon. A compact between rulers and people is a pure fiction constructed for legal convenience, and possibly useful as a mode of viewing the relations of the governor and the governed. But there never was in human history any such compact. The very idea of it supposes government already in existence. The same thing is true, if not to the same extent, in regard to the theory of Church and State, as an alliance of independent powers, bound together by contract. Long before such contract can be formed, the Church is already alongside the State, and virtually associated with it, as its companion—it may be as its master, rather than its servant. In England we have already seen how the Church grew along with the State, and in advance of it rather than dependent upon it; in Scotland, the Church, during the end of the sixteenth and a considerable part of the seventeenth century, was really more powerful than the State. Theories of alliance, in short, between Church and State, like theories of contract as the basis of government, are after-growths upon historical facts. They do not constitute or explain the facts. They have a certain foundation, no doubt. In the growth of the spiritual along with the civil order, it becomes necessary to adjust their relations to one another; the Church, in the very

fact of its existence as a distinct order, acquires rights and privileges and jurisdiction, which must be defined and limited and marked off from the functions of the State. This process of adjustment and definition can only be done by statutory enactment, and there has grown up consequently a body of law regulating the relations of Church and State, and constituting, so to speak, the conditions of establishment. But this is very different from any statutory dependence upon the State. There can be nothing less true to the facts of the case or evidence of history, than to suppose that what is called the 'State Church' in either country has been called into being merely by State legislation, and endowed by State funds, and that it is equally competent for the State to withdraw what is called its support as it was originally to bestow it. What was never bestowed may, no doubt, be withdrawn by legislative power, because this power is in a certain sense omnipotent in relation to all privilege and property; but certainly there is no ordinary sense in which it can be said that the revenues of the Church were created and allocated by the State. They were the gifts of individuals, for the spiritual benefit of the people, and in a true sense, therefore, the property of the Church so long as used consistently with their original gift. Any wanton interference with the property of the Church is as unjustifiable, therefore, as interference with any other species of property. The idea of separate powers and funds lying between them for arbitrary disposal is a convenient fiction for the radical spoiler; but it is nothing more. The

revenues really belong to the parishes in which they are gathered, for a definite purpose, and they can only be alienated by repudiating, not merely ancient law and usage, but considerations of moral equity and government.

The theory of Church and State as two distinct powers in formal alliance naturally lends itself to the voluntary theory on the negative side. It is in fact implied in all Voluntaryism—which ignores ideas of historical growth in its very conception—and looks upon Church and State as absolutely distinct factors, which can be manipulated at will by legislative action. According to this theory, the State is not only not the Church, but it stands apart from it; and any alliance formed between them is the result not merely of compact, but of compact under the more or less base motive of corrupting the Church, and destroying its spirituality. Church-and-State from Constantine downwards have been not a natural and beneficent result of historical progress, but a bad accident in the course of events, from which the Church has suffered, and the advance of civil government no less suffered. To such thinkers, if they can be called thinkers at all, historical facts are mere accidents, good or bad. They are not parts of a development, but mere items in a series. Institutions, in other words, have no special value to them as institutions; they are conceivably as much the product of craft and fraud as of social and natural necessities. They look upon the past with no special veneration and respect. History is judged in the light of theory, and the underlying theory or conception in their mind is, that the spiritual power

is not only something essentially distinct from the State, but rightfully distinct from it. The one is secular, the other is spiritual. The one has no religious meaning or character, the other has no coercive or legal character. Here, as so often in theories, extremes meet; and the High Churchman who makes so much of the Church and its authority, shakes hands with the Secularist or Voluntary, who would keep the State independent of all ecclesiastical contact or influence. There is something to be said for both points of view. Spiritual authority, rightly understood, is of course entirely distinct from any external authority whatever. State organisation is, so far, rightfully independent of ecclesiastical interference. The High Churchman, in isolating spiritual authority, and making it supreme, is only claiming for such authority, when truly understood, its true character. The Secularist, in isolating State authority, and keeping it distinct from ecclesiastical, is separating things which in idea are quite distinct. But then, in trying to carry out their respective theories, both ignore the facts of life and history. We cannot, in point of fact, as we have seen, disjoin the spiritual and the natural, the sacred and the civil. It is only in idea we can keep them absolutely distinct. The one is spirit, the other body; but the spirit is only known to us through some bodily environment. We cannot lay hold of it in itself. If we try, for example, to analyse what all churches speak of as spiritual jurisdiction, and of which no church in its past history has made more than our own, what a figment does it appear. It stands

before us, it may not be under the same guise, but constituted after the same manner as any civil or legal authority. It is the action of a court guided by the same principles of law and order as profess to guide all jurisdiction. It has no different quality from any other jurisdiction, save that it professes to be the act of spiritual persons. But spiritual persons have not, and cannot have, unless inspired, any special right or law on their side. Their decision, save in so far based upon special knowledge, can have no special validity. And so any machinery with which the freest church works, is nothing else and nothing better in its texture—whatever it may be in its knowledge—than that with which any State church works. An ecclesiastical synod or assembly may be more competent to deal with ecclesiastical, or what are called spiritual questions, than a House of Commons; but not certainly because it has any higher organism for dealing with such questions. The very same men may compose both. The mere fact that they were acting in the one case in the capacity of church officers, in the other case as men of business, cannot possibly affect the quality of their decisions. On no question has greater delusion prevailed, or, it may be said, still prevails, than on this—that a result is secularised as it proceeds from an assembly bearing no spiritual name; or again, acquires spiritual authority as professing to proceed from such an assembly. The truth is, that nowhere can the spiritual be isolated and caught by itself. It mixes itself necessarily in all higher human affairs; and all these higher affairs, again, are only what they are

because allied with it. The Church is distinct from the world in idea, but never in fact. It is not a separate entity, but a divine spirit penetrating the world, giving it life, strength, virtue, comeliness. In so far as it has visibility at all, or is a church, it is mixed with the world. Christ no doubt said, and Voluntaries have unintelligently quoted his saying in their favour: 'My kingdom is not of this world.' But the saying has no relation to the Church as a church, or corporate embodiment of the Spirit, but only to the Spirit itself. The kingdom spoken of is internal, and not external. It has no tangibility; it is not meat nor drink in any form, 'but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.' And in this spiritual region alone is it possible to have an absolute separation between the sacred and the civil. Whenever you touch earth at all, the two become inextricably mixed up, and notwithstanding all the commonplaces uttered on this subject, it may be said that the idea of churches entirely free from all state connection, or from intermixture of worldly usage and government, is purely chimerical. The only real question is as to the character of the environment, or as to whether the flesh and blood which, it may be said, clothe the spiritual life of all churches, be of a more public and national, or of a more private and sectarian order. To suppose a church to be more spiritual because it has clothed itself, so to speak, with a body of its own, instead of having fitted itself to the national organisation and order, is simply an imagination without any true meaning when analysed.

The Voluntary theory, therefore, or the theory of a radical divorce in the nature of things between Church and State, is not only unhistorical, but essentially unveracious. There can be no such divorce. Every church, by its mere existence, entwines itself more or less with the State, and incurs legal relations and obligations. The higher attributes of the State—all which makes it a progressive and educational, a beneficent as well as a police power—imply the working of Christian principles within it, or in other words, an incorporate religious life; and again, the Church, by its simple activities, by the fact that it is a body and constitution, as well as a soul, touches the State, with its complex machinery of law and order, at every point. Instead of being separate, or tending to separate, they tend to merge at every point, and to run up into the same magnificent ideal.

Is this ideal, then—the identity of Church and State—the true theory of the relation of the two? This theory, as we know, was maintained by Hooker, by Dr Arnold, after a manner by Coleridge. It answers more to the actual facts—to the manner in which Church and State have grown in unison, than any theory of independent powers now coalescing, now separating. The Church and State are seen interwoven from the first; the civil order of a community constantly borrowing from its spiritual order, and the latter strengthening and organising itself in legal forms. The State is, as it were, the outside structure of the national life, the Church the inside structure of it, and as they fit into one another, and

mutually adapt themselves to the common end of intensifying such life, each reaches its true ideal, and helps to build up the fabric of national prosperity. Of course it is not meant, in such a theory, that the functions of the Church and the State are identical, or that the officers of the one are necessarily the officers of the other. That is not the idea underlying the theory. The activities of the Church are in themselves distinct from the special activities of the State. They relate to different spheres. They bring into play different faculties. They promote separate, if related ends. But both the one and the other are required to make a true national life. To cut off the civil from the spiritual order, and to make the former merely contributory to physical ends, is to debase it. To cut off the spiritual from the civil, is not merely to divorce what God has joined, but to convert the spiritual into the ritual, and in separating it from the common circle of humanity—under the plea of its sacredness—really to degrade it, and to prepare the way for turning religion into a superstition, and the Church into a priesthood. The marriage of the spiritual and the civil is not only eternal in God's order, but the divine means of bracing the one and elevating the other. Let them sink apart, and injury comes to both. The State loses in permanent dignity, in enduring virtue; the Church, in reasonableness, breadth, and intelligence. To this extent they are identical, that their ideals are the same. They contemplate alike the highest welfare of man, and merge into one another, not indeed as activities—so

far they will always remain distinct—but as ends. Borrowing from one another mutual help, they both labour, not only to rear, but to crown the edifice of a higher humanity.

This is the lesson of history. National churches have been among the most potent factors of human progress. To aver the contrary, is simply to misread history, and mistake the true elements of civilisation. If, as it has been said, the current is now strongly running against such churches, it by no means follows that it is running in a higher or better direction. The age, unhappily, is no longer an age of faith, but of scepticism—no longer of positive spiritual aspiration, but of negation and despair of the old wholesome virtues. Individualism in life—agnosticism in philosophy—have replaced the old ideals. Sectarianism instead of nationalism in religion is part of the same movement. It ministers to the same narrowness of feeling, the same mediocrity of ideal, the same self-centred worship which is eating into the heart of humanity, and instead of carrying it to a higher future, urging it toward peculiar abuses of pride and self-indulgence.

V. And if the modern types of religion come short of the old in theoretic completeness, and tend to divide or separate themselves into isolated sections of truth, inferior in intellectual dignity and power, no less do they come short in practical effect. They do not touch us with the same sense of spiritual beauty as the ancient did. They

may be really as pervasive. There are probably aspects in which they ought to impress us more. The religion of Nonconformity, of the modern Tabernacle with all its hundred agencies of good—or of modern Ritualism with its countless devices for stimulating the devotional, and strengthening the philanthropic impulses—is, and ought to be, deeply interesting to every pious heart. They are adapted to new circumstances, they meet new requirements and difficulties. But what picture of modern religious work will ever touch the heart like that of the parish priest living among his people, their companion and friend in all circumstances, the instructor of their youth, the guide of their middle life, the ministrant of their declining years; God's own servant everywhere. And where have such pictures ever been found save in national churches? The very idea of the parish, which lies so much at the root of all 'common' religion, is national. It is the product of State churches, unknown—save in a wholly different sense—in America and the colonies. No element of modern civilisation can ever take its place, or is ever likely to be so potent for good. If our national churches had done nothing else for the country than plant into the national heart the idea of the parish, with all its sanctified and benign activities, they would have done for us something more than all dissenting churches together. And it may be questioned if any access of spiritual force, supposing such an access possibly to follow Disestablishment, would compensate for the breaking up of this idea and all its associations. Look upon

the parish church as it is known by thousands in England and Scotland, the sweetness of its sequestered site, the glory of its old associations, with its simple spire or tower pointing heavenwards, giving a moral as well as scenic effect to the village or hamlet clustered about it. Think of the charities as well as benedictions which radiate from it as a centre—blessing for the babe entering upon life, and for the sire closing it; the kindly visitation for the sick-bed, the help for the weak, the counsel for the strong; and all this from generation to generation linked each to each by natural piety. There never were sources of well-being—of Christian light and leading—comparable to the parish churches of our country. There never were more beautiful types of manly or tender feeling, of ministration blessed at once to giver and receiver, than have grown around such centres. This is national religion in its practical form, and no picture of religion that the world has ever seen rivals it for a moment. And shall we sacrifice all this to the demands of an unfeasible religious equality. Shall we displace the parish minister, living in his own modest manse, and dispensing his modest bounties, temporal and spiritual, for the clamant hedge preacher, or the Nonconformist zealot, living by the favour of some rich town congregation or patron, with a gospel of zeal rather than of peace—of dogma rather than of charity. Let us hope not. If we do, we shall never be able to replace the old picture. Our country parishes may not sink into spiritual darkness, but they will never be as they have been, the homes of an ancient piety, which

has grown beautiful during years of quiet, and which is all the more fruitful and true because it does not cry, nor lift up its voice in the streets.

We may seem to some to be painting a picture, rather than describing a reality. There is, it will be said, another side to the picture—parishes neglected, ministers careless, and even examples of evil rather than of good to their flock. No doubt such things are; and it is of the nature of national churches to make it more difficult to remove evils of this kind, than in mere voluntary churches. This is not to be denied. And no Christian patriot, while he deprecates the overthrow of an ancient system, will not earnestly desire the reform of all abuses that may attach to the system. In maintaining the principle of national religion, and all the good which has flowed from it, it is by no means necessary to maintain any of the evils which have grown around it. Let these evils, on the contrary, be swept away. Renew the old, but do not destroy it. It is strange how much more naturally the idea of destruction than of reform comes to the modern mind. But the idea is a poor one, and may seriously imperil, while it cannot advance, our national well-being. For, as one says who has addressed many wise remonstrances to the modern spirit: ‘It is the law of progressive human life, that we shall not build in the air, but in the already high-storied temple of the thoughts of our ancestors; in the crannies and under the eaves we are meant for the most part to nest ourselves, like swallows: though the stronger of us sometimes may bring, for increase

of height, some small white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which is indeed done by those ordered to such masonry, but never without modest submission to the Eternal Wisdom, nor ever in any great degree, except by persons *trained reverently to some large portion of the wisdom of the past.*¹

¹ Ruskin's *Bibliotheca Pastorum*, pp. x. xi.



ST GILES' LECTURES.

SIXTH SERIES—THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

LECTURE III.

FREE-WILL OFFERINGS, TITHES, AND OTHER
MEANS OF SUPPORTING RELIGIOUS SER-
VICES, HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED.

By the Rev. JOHN CUNNINGHAM, D.D., Minister of the
Parish of Crieff.

RELIGION in its first forms did not require any pecuniary support. It was purely a personal matter. Arising from those feelings of hope and fear, of awe and reverence, in that recognition of the divine and the diabolical, which we denominate the religious instincts, it found vent in such acts as were supposed to win the favour of some good being, or avert the anger of some evil one. There are such religions still in the world. They have existed from the time when man rose above the brutes. The oldest histories refer to them. Cain and Abel each offered his own sacrifice. Wherever Abraham pitched his tent, there also he erected his altar, and did his praying and sacrificing

without the help of a paid priest. In the first period every man was his own priest ; in the second period, he was priest in his own household.

But in all stages of society there are some persons who are supposed to have more power with god or devil than their neighbours. Such are the rain-makers of modern Africa ; such were the Druids of ancient Europe. These are the priest in his crude state. The vulgar naturally employ these to do their religion for them, and employing them, they must pay them. Moreover, men very generally desire to do their religion by proxy ; and when the religion of a household becomes the religion of a tribe, and tribal sacrifices are offered, it becomes absolutely necessary that there should be a class of men to do the sacrificial work. Hence the priestly caste, often hereditary.

No doubt, from the earliest times, these holy persons received special rewards for special services. But their first systematic remuneration came from their appropriating to themselves certain portions, generally the choicest portions, of the animals offered in sacrifice. The animals were offered to the gods, and very naturally the priests, as the friends and favourites, and representatives of the gods, ate what the gods did not eat themselves. The more useless parts, such as the entrails and their fat, were sent up to heaven in clouds of smoke. It was a very ancient maxim, that they who serve the altar should live by the altar.

People sometimes imagine there must have been great waste connected with the ancient sacrifices, as the gods never visibly accepted the offerings that

were made to them. But there was really little or no waste at all ; the most solemn holocausts were ordered with a due regard to economy. The priests claimed their share, and got it. The sacrifice was generally followed by a feast, in which all joined. When our Scandinavian ancestors had slain their victims, in what we would call the chancel of their church, they passed to the nave, and there roasted and devoured the flesh of them, amid boisterous rejoicings. As we know from the writings of St Paul, and many other authorities, 'meat offered to idols' was regularly sold in the butchers' shops of those days. These were the perquisites of the priests.

The Mosaic code was very specific as to the portions of the priests, and at the same time very liberal. They receive all the flesh of sin and trespass offerings, part of the meal offering,¹ and the skin of the burnt offering. Of the thank offering they get the breast and the right thigh.² These offerings partly depended on the free-will of the people, but if they were made, the priest must have his share. In addition to these, they had the firstlings of the flock and the first-fruits of the harvest.

But the priests and Levites were not allowed to depend solely on their share of the animals offered in sacrifice. They had the tithes, and these seem to have formed their main support.

Tithes go back to prehistoric times, and their origin cannot be traced. Ten appears to have been a sacred number, from the time man was able to

¹ Leviticus ii. 1, and elsewhere. Revised version.

² Leviticus vii. 32, and elsewhere. Revised version.

count ten upon his fingers; and among almost all ancient nations it was customary to devote a tenth to the gods or to the priests. This custom was known not only among the Jews, but among the Chaldeans, the Greeks, the Carthaginians, the Latins, and the Arabians. In the hazy period of the patriarchs, we read of Abraham dedicating the tenth part of his spoils taken in war to the priest Melchisedek. In the clearer light of Grecian history, we learn how the Greeks, after driving the Persians out of their country, presented a golden tripod to Apollo out of the tenths of the spoils taken from the invaders. But it was not only the spoils of war which were thus tithed. The produce of the field, the increase of the flock, the outcome of the mine, goods which had been confiscated, were subjected to this sacred tax. In some instances we read of the tenth being devoted, not to the god, but to the king or other ruler. By a prescription which goes back beyond all history, the tenth was esteemed the true proportion of a man's income to set apart for both sacred and civil purposes.

When, therefore, the Levitical tithe system was instituted it was no new thing. It was merely the legalising of a custom already well known, and almost everywhere acted on. It proceeded on the assumption that a tenth of all increase rightfully belonged to God, from whom all increase comes, and as divine property it was appropriated by the priest. 'All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; ' so it is written in the Book of Leviticus.¹ 'And unto the

¹ xxvii. 30.

children of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, even the service of the tent of meeting. And henceforward the children of Israel shall not come nigh the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin and die,' so it is written in the Book of Numbers.¹ And the meaning of it is this, that Jehovah being the rightful owner of the tithes, consigns them to the priests who serve in His tabernacle, and the Israelites, who had hitherto come and sacrificed and worshipped for themselves, are now forbidden to enter the court of sacrifice. By another ordinance, the tithe of the tithe gathered by the Levites is assigned to the priests, who were fewer in number, though higher in grade. And in later times, at least, the tithe extended not only to the fruits of the field, the corn and the wine, and the oil; but to the increase of the flocks and herds.

This tithe system, as we know, continued down to the time of Christ; and when He was in the habit of going up to the temple, it was in full operation. In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, the Pharisee boasted that 'he gave tithes of all that he possessed.' And elsewhere mention is made of men who scrupulously gave a tithe of the paltriest herbs which grew in their garden, 'mint and anise and cummin.' It was regarded by every Jew as having a divine sanction.

It is held by many people still that tithes are of divine origin, and therefore of perpetual obligation. Milton said something against that view, but

¹ xviii. 21, 22. Revised version.

a good deal can be said for it. Without going so far, may it not be asked if what was religiously right in Old Testament times, can be religiously wrong in New Testament times? Most people in Scotland believe that the Levitical law was divine, and therefore they must hold that levying tithes upon the farmers and flockmasters of those days, however oppressive, must have been the best possible way of supporting religion; and that seems to indicate that there may be circumstances in which a tithe-supported church is not only justifiable, but the best that can be devised. It may be argued that what is expedient in one set of circumstances may be inexpedient in different circumstances; but that may be granted without touching the principle at stake. If, in any circumstances, it is right that there should be a tithe-supported church, the principle of an established church is conceded. It is then merely a question as to the circumstances in which such a church is warranted. And seeing a tithe-supported church existed under the Levitical economy, and with a divine sanction, it must now be shown in what respect the circumstances are so changed, that what was right then is wrong now. Ministers must be fed and clothed and housed, as well as priests, and the religious feelings have lost rather than gained in force during the last three thousand years, so that, if free-will offerings were not divinely deemed enough then, they are not likely to be sufficient now.

Jesus of Nazareth worshipped in a state-supported temple, and ate, at his last supper, a Paschal lamb which had been slain by a tithe-supported priest, and

yet there are people now who make it a matter of conscience not to enter a state-supported church, just because it is state-supported, and would not for worlds eat the Lord's Supper, as administered by a tithe-supported minister, and that just because he is so supported. Are they better than Jesus?

Jesus frequently denounced the sins of his time ; but He never hinted that the national recognition of religion was a sin. He frequently foreshadowed the religion of the future, but He never declared that it must be divorced from all state interference, and left to struggle for existence without any outside help. So far as his utterances go, it is left an open question ; so that in some circumstances a state-supported church may be the best, and in other circumstances a church supported by the free-will offerings of the people. Neither is prescribed, nor proscribed.

In addition to the tithes, the Jew, when he went up to the temple to worship, had to submit to the impost of half a shekel for maintaining the temple services, and besides, he might put any coin he pleased in the temple treasury, from the mite of the widow upwards. Thus, it may be said that in the Hebrew Church there was a happy combination of free-will and legal compulsion, of Voluntaryism and State aid.

The first Christians were dissenters from the state church, but unwillingly so, and it is certain that even the apostles did not at first contemplate separation. They continued to haunt the temple, and even take part in its services ; they regularly frequented the synagogue, and endeavoured to per-

suade their countrymen that Jesus was the Christ. Their idea was that Christianity might be grafted on the old Jewish stock, and the Jewish Church continued, with the one new article added to its creed, that the Messiah had come. Happily, circumstances proved stronger than the apostles; it was proved that the old bottles would not hold the new and still fermenting wine; and the Christians reluctantly found themselves a sect of nonconformists, outcasts from the synagogues and the temples, both Hebrew and heathen. Accordingly they were left to shift for themselves, as they best could.

No money was required to support the office-bearers of the new church, because at first, and for a considerable time there were no office-bearers requiring support. The apostles appear to have supported themselves by their trades, with occasional gifts from generous converts. The deacons of the Jerusalem Church were chosen to give rather than to get. The Pauline Churches seem to have had no officials at all, and every man just gave such help as he could. But there were multitudes of poor people in the Christian community; the Church very early became the asylum to which the pauperised and oppressed fled from the terrible tyrannies of the time; and money was needed for them, and it was given in abundance, and perhaps all the more abundantly because it was universally believed that the end of all things was at hand. A voluntary communism was introduced, and continued in the Church (or at least in portions of it), in one form or another, for two hundred years. The bishops had become the treasurers of the Church

(perhaps it would be more correct to say that the treasurers of the Church had become its bishops), and dispensed its charity, and naturally retained a portion for themselves and for their presbyters and deacons.

It is customary with some people to speak of the apostolic and sub-apostolic period as the heyday of the Church, and as the exemplar for all future times. The clergy, it is said, were then dependent on the free-will offerings of the people, and so should they now and always. Are the people who reason thus prepared to re-introduce the whole church system as it then existed? Are they prepared for communism? Are the Nonconformist millionaires ready 'to sell their possessions' so that they and their fellow-Christians may have 'all things in common?' And are they prepared for an uneducated ministry? willing to have set over them serious-thinking men who will work at their trade during the week—bakers, weavers, carpenters, shepherds—and preach to them on Sunday? Such men as we now see preaching at the corners of the streets? such men as officiate in some Methodist meeting-houses? If any one is anxious to have the apostolic and sub-apostolic time brought back, he must be prepared for all this, and much more. Easy to support a ministry which required no support! easy to get money when there was a communistic law!

Is there any reason to believe that the apostles and their successors preferred being left to struggle for themselves? All the presumption is the opposite way. They clung as long as they could to the old Church. They continued to speak with veneration

of the Mosaic economy. The idea of a personal religion apart from a national religion had scarcely yet entered into the mind of man. It was therefore the first Christians were persecuted—persecuted not so much for their religious beliefs, as because they were members of a secret society, which it was thought might be dangerous to the State. Rome could not tolerate people who had set themselves up against their country's faith and their country's gods. Such people were unworthy to live. There was no help, therefore, for the Christians, and no choice. They were a proscribed people. They could no longer conform to the national religion, and they must pay the penalty. It must be told, they paid it without complaining; they even gloried in their sufferings; and in the apologies which they laid before the emperors they vindicated their position, but never whimpered because of their hard lot.

For centuries the Christians were too glad only to be let alone. For them, endowments and State recognition were out of the question. Exile, imprisonment, and death, being thrown to the lions, being smeared with pitch and burned in the gardens of Nero, was more likely to be their fate. To say, then, that because they had no endowments we should have none, is the rankest unreason. As well say because they had no churches then, we should have none now; because they had no canonical collection of the gospels and epistles then, we should have none now; because they were persecuted then, we should court persecution still. They had to fight their battle against paganism, and they fought it without flinching or fear, and

when they were victors, they got the spoils of victory. When they had driven out, not only the false gods, but the foulness and falsehoods which had been fostered by them ; when they proved that their faith was fitted to benefit and elevate mankind, to purify society, to strengthen states, then they received imperial recognition and support. And the moment they were offered it, they gratefully received it.

It is true the Church had thriven wonderfully even when left to depend on the communism which existed in some quarters, and on the free-will offerings which were poured into her lap in others. But it must be remembered that the Christian enthusiasm was then at its highest pitch. The Church had but to ask to receive. And the clergy proved themselves then, as they have always done, sturdy beggars, and, what is worse, keen legacy-hunters. The Roman clergy grew rich upon the gifts of Roman matrons. Laws required to be made to prevent bishops and monks taking advantage of the superstitious fears of the dying, and securing their wealth by deathbed bequests. Jerome complains that while play-actors, and harlots, and pagan priests could receive legacies, the Christian clergy could not ; but, at the same time, he honestly confesses that there was more shame in the facts which had led to the law than in the law itself. The bulk of the Church's wealth, even after it was established, came not from the imperial exemptions and revenues it had secured, but from the gifts and legacies it had accumulated. Voluntaryism, originating in superstition, and stimulated by

unscrupulous clerical greed, lies at the bottom of the Church's endowments. In the fifth century, it was already enormously wealthy; but it was not yet in possession of any State revenues worth mentioning.

But almost from the very first the presbyters and bishops aimed at the possession of such fixed revenues as the Jewish priesthood possessed. St Paul seems to encourage the idea, when he wrote to the Corinthians: 'Know ye not that they which minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they which wait upon the altar, have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.'¹ Had St Paul thought that the Christian ministers should be supported in a different way from the Jewish priests, he would have said so here; but, contrariwise, he puts both on the same basis, and would have both maintained in the same way.²

Tithes had formed the staple of the income of the priests and Levites, and from the second century downwards, we find the Christian bishops arguing that men were still bound to devote the tenth of their property to God; and, in fact, aiming at the reintroduction of the tithe system. Irenæus³ points out with pardonable pride that while the Jews devoted a tenth of their goods to God, the Christians devoted their all. Origen speaks in like manner of

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. Revised version.

² The author of the Apostolic Constitutions argues from this passage that tithes were due to the Christian ministry. See Book II. 25.

³ Her. iv. 18, 2.

the tithes as a limitation which the Christians should exceed. Cyprian, it would appear, had not found the generosity of the Carthaginian Christians quite so great, for contrasting the liberality of apostolic times with his own, he says, 'Then they used to give for sale houses and estates, but now we do not give even the tenths of our patrimony. Thus has the vigour of faith dwindled away among us; thus has the strength of believers grown weak.'¹ The Apostolic Constitutions probably belong, in the main, to the close of the second century, though they contain interpolations of the third or even fourth. They speak of tithes as already recognised in the Church, and argue as if the Levitical law as to tithing were still binding. 'Let the bishop,' it is written, 'use those tithes and first-fruits which are given according to the command of God, as a man of God.' 'Oblations and tithes belong to Christ, our high-priest, and to those who minister to him.'² 'Let all the first-fruits be brought to the bishop, and to the presbyters, and to the deacons, for their maintenance; but let all the tithes be for the maintenance of the rest of the clergy, and of the virgins and widows, and of those under the trial of poverty.'³

Coming down to the fourth century, we find the great writers of that period inculcating the giving of tithes as a Christian duty. 'God,' says St Ambrose, 'has reserved the tenth part to himself, and it is not lawful for a man to retain what God has reserved.'⁴ 'If people,' says St Jerome reproachfully,

¹ *De Unitate*, 26.

³ Book viii. 30.

² Book ii. 25.

⁴ Sermo xxxiv.

'be not willing to sell all they have and give to the poor, they should at least give a tithe—otherwise they cheat God.'¹ 'The Pharisee,' cried Augustine, 'whose righteousness you are bound to exceed, gave tithes; you do not give even a thousandth part:'² and elsewhere he warns the tillers of the soil not to defraud the Church of its tithes.³ Chrysostom, in one of his homilies, exclaims, 'The Jews paid two tithes, but a man now remarks to me with astonishment, "So-and-so gives tithes." Is not this shameful! If under the law it was dangerous to neglect tithes, how much more dangerous now.'⁴

In the light of these statements we can easily trace the manner in which tithes were introduced in the Christian community. In the second century the boast was that the Christians exceeded the Jews in their liberality, and gave more than a tithe. By the third century their first enthusiasm had abated, their offerings to the Church became smaller, and the preachers and writers now cried out that they were bound to give at least a tithe, as the Jews had done, according to divine commandment. The tendency, in fact, had now fairly set in to make the Christian Church a copy of the Jewish, with its priests and Levites, its altars and sacrifices, and tithes. By the fourth century some niggardly Christians did not give more than a hundredth or a thousandth part of their income to the Church; and those who gave a tenth were regarded as marvels of generosity. Augustine, Chrysostom, and others denounced these niggards; and urged that a tithe

¹ In Malachi iii. 8.

² In Psalm cxlvi.

³ Sermo xlvi.

⁴ Hom. iv. in Ephes. ii.

was binding on every one—binding on the Christian as it was on the Jew. Under this teaching, the belief gradually grew up that tithes were the divinely appointed provision for the clergy and the poor, and though the payment of them was still nominally voluntary, it became really compulsory, in some branches of the Church at least. If a man claimed to be a Christian, he must pay his tithes, as a man nowadays, who claims to be a Free Churchman, or a United Presbyterian, must pay his contributions to the church funds, or leave the 'body.'

There was as yet no law, civil or ecclesiastical, ordaining the payment of tithes, but when the usage was established, the law followed. In the year 585, the council of Macon declared that the divine laws granted to priests and ministers the tenth of all possessions ; that the bulk of the Christians for a long time had observed these laws, but that of late they had been showing a disposition to evade them, and that therefore they were obliged to ordain that the faithful revive this ancient custom, and give the tithe to the ministers of the altar, to be employed for relieving the poor or for redeeming captives. It may be said that this canon, instead of proving the general payment of tithes, rather proves that the custom of paying them was falling into desuetude ; and so it does in regard to France at least ; but it also proves that the custom had existed in the Church from ancient times, and that this council was now resolved to enforce it. It may further be said that the tithes were to be employed, not for the support of the clergy, but for the relief of the

poor, and the ransom of captives: and so it was; but they were to be paid to the bishops, as the treasurers of the Church, and we know that while the bishops did not neglect the poor, neither did they forget themselves. There was an understood proportion for the one and the other.

This ecclesiastical law had as yet no civil sanction, but it scarcely required it, for the canon of a council had as much force in those days as an act of parliament. Charlemagne was the first prince who gave to tithes the sanction of his great name and wide authority. He made the payment of them imperative throughout his dominions. 'Let every man,' says the seventh Capitulary, 'give a tenth, and let it be dispensed at the hands of the bishop.' This was about 778 A.D. It had taken upwards of three hundred years to establish the usage; two hundred years more to transmute the usage into an ecclesiastical law; and another two hundred years to get a civil sanction to the ecclesiastical rule. No doubt it had been an uphill struggle all along. But it shows what can be accomplished by persistency, and how usages tend to harden into laws.

Dr Hatch, in the *Contemporary Review* for September 1883, maintains that modern tithes have no connection whatever with the old Mosaic impost, and that they arose from civil enactments, founded on the transition through which land rights and social usages were passing in the eighth century. He seems to say, though he does not say it directly, that the Church then possessed the greater part of the land throughout the Frankish dominions. It became necessary that this land should be occupied

by laymen who would cultivate it, and supply the Frankish armies with soldiers. Charles Martel and Charles the Great therefore 'overrode the nominal ownership, and granted perpetual leases of the Church lands, subject to the payment of a rent to the several churches to which they belonged.' That rent was the tithe, and it was so fixed because 'a tenth of the produce was the ordinary *tributum soli* in the Roman provinces.' It is almost a presumptuous sin to differ on such a point of ecclesiastical law and history from one whose authority is so high as that of Dr Hatch. But it seems to me impossible to disconnect modern from ancient tithes. The references to tithes may not be so numerous as we might expect during the first seven centuries, but I have quoted some, and these could easily be quadrupled. The Church was certainly a great landowner in the eighth century, but there is no evidence that its possessions were so vast as Dr Hatch supposes. And if only the church lands leased to laymen paid the tithe as rent, how came it that within so short a period a tithe was levied upon all lands whatever; and that Alcuin was obliged to remonstrate with Charlemagne against tithing the lands of the newly converted Saxons.

However this may be, from the eighth century downward, the payment of tithes became universal over Christendom. Alfred in England imitated the policy of Charlemagne on the Continent. Malachi iii. 8, became a favourite text, and was thought still more decisive of the matter than the Capitularies of Charlemagne: 'Will a man rob

God? yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.' After that who could refuse to pay, more especially when the thunders of the Church and the sword of the civil magistrate were ready to enforce the argument of the prophet? About 793 we hear of Offa, king of the Mercians, paying tithes. In the Saxon Chronicle we are told that Ethelwulf, king of Wessex, in the year 855, 'chartered the tenth part of his land, over all his kingdom, for the glory of God and his own eternal salvation.' How early the system was introduced into Scotland we cannot say. There are no records to guide us. The Culdees appear to have been great landholders, and to have lived upon their rents rather than upon tithes. In most things they were behind the march of events on continental Europe, and probably in this too. During the reign of David I. we have the first mention of tithes, but they had evidently existed before this, and thus go back beyond the title to any property in the kingdom. Mr Nenion Elliot, in his *Teind Papers*, remarks that a great part of the soil of the country at that time belonged to the crown, and hence that the tithes never belonged to the subsequent proprietors, who must have got their grants of land subject to this burden.¹

¹ In the Chartulary of Glasgow there is a curious charter by Malcolm IV. (*circa* 1160), in favour of the bishop, of the lands of Conclud, granted to compensate him for the king's transgression against the Church in having given a charter of certain lands in favour of two of his nobles, without reserving the teinds belonging to the Church, or, as it bears, without securing the Church in its dues.—*Scottish Church*, Oct. 1885, p. 359.

From this time forward, teinds (the Scotch name of the tithes or tenths) enter largely into the records of the Church. They are specified in almost all charters, the right to them is ratified in many acts of parliament and Privy Council, they were dear to the hearts of all churchmen, they are glorified in the lives of the saints and the chronicles of the bishoprics and religious houses. They were looked upon as the very life-blood of the Church.

Tithes were originally paid to the bishop, and by him dispensed to the clergy and poor who were dependent on him. It is not very clear when they were separated from the bishop's church and made parochial. But from the date of the erection of parishes in Scotland, the parish teinds were devoted to the parish priest. A baron got a tract of land from the king; he built a church, and appointed a priest, he teinded the land for his support, or found the land already made subject to teind in his grant, and thus his barony became a parish. We see this process very clearly in the parish of Ednam. Thor, apparently a nobleman of Scandinavian descent, got the grant of a piece of moorland from the king; he cultivated it, he built a church from the foundations, as he proudly tells us in his charter; he gave a ploughgate of land to the priest, as was usual in such cases, and afterwards the tithes of his manor. Thus parishes and teinds arose. There is not in the whole legislation of Scotland any act establishing the teind system or making it compulsory. It was founded entirely on ideas borrowed from the Old Testament, and on a usage which had grown up under the teaching

of the clergy. The tithes were the proportion of the produce of the soil dedicated to religion from the time that land rights existed, and therefore they were usually specified in charters, and levied and paid as undoubtedly due. Many parliaments guaranteed the Church in all its ancient rights and possessions ; but no parliament created them.

Unfortunately, the patrons of the churches possessed the right of gifting away the tithes of their parishes to any bishopric or religious house in which they felt an interest. And very often they did feel such an interest. For a younger brother or a son might be the bishop or the abbot, and it was natural they should wish to enrich him, when they could do it so easily without impoverishing themselves. Or perhaps a patron had a desire to be buried in the chancel of the abbey church, and to have masses said for his soul, or for the soul of his wife, or for the soul of some lost child, and no way was more convenient or more economical than granting his parish to his favourite monastery. Thus, by the time the Reformation came, no fewer than six hundred and seventy-eight parishes had been appropriated, as it was called. In these cases, the bishop or the abbot drew the tithes of the parish, and appointed some brother of the order, or some starveling of a secular priest, who was called a vicar, to discharge the duties. This led to a division of the tithes into parsonage and vicarage—the parsonage tithes extending to all kinds of grain, and the vicarage only to such small matters as fowls, eggs, milk, &c.

While the teinds constituted the ordinary revenues

of the parish priests, they did not constitute the whole wealth of the Church. The bishops and abbots were great landowners. Some of their possessions go back beyond history. The Keltic clergy appear to have held large tracts of land. In 1115, King David caused an inquest to be made by the elders and wise men of Cumbria as to the lands and churches which had formerly belonged to the see of Glasgow, and had been lost sight of during the wars and confusion of the preceding centuries, and it resulted in the bishopric being put in possession of many valuable manors and ploughgates scattered over the south of Scotland and Cumberland. The Bishop of Moray was lord of eight baronies, one of these being Strathspey, which is said to have included the whole valley of the Spey, from Laggan to Rothes. Some of the abbots were greater landowners than the bishops. They had farms, sheep-runs, coal-mines, rights of hunting, of fishing, of hawking, superiorities of towns, and almost every conceivable privilege. The Abbey of Paisley owned about two-thirds of the whole soil of the parish, with acres and ploughgates in almost every district of the west. The Stuarts, moreover, had given them the tithe of the hunting, and the skins of all the deer taken in the adjoining forests, pasture for their cattle and their swine, a mill at Paisley, a salmon net in the Clyde at Renfrew, a right of fishing in the Cart and at Lochwinnoch, the privilege of quarrying both building-stones and limestones, of digging coal for their granges, smithies, and breweries, of cutting turf and greenwood for all

their operations. The superiority of the town of Paisley, moreover, belonged to them, and the abbot nominated the magistrates. In addition to all this, the abbey drew the teinds of thirty parishes, and yet it was by no means the richest religious house in Scotland. In Scotland, in England, and in several other countries, the Church had accumulated, in the course of a thousand years, by fair means and by foul, about a half of the whole wealth of the country. But it must be told that in most cases it had got its lands when they were moss or moorland, and by skilful cultivation had made them the greenest spots on the landscape.

In addition to their rents and tithes, the clergy had still other sources of revenue. They had their fees for almost every religious office they performed—baptismal fees, marriage fees, burial fees. They had their corpse presents, which in Scotland were felt to be particularly grievous. After a death, the vicar carried off the best cow in the byre, and the 'uppermost cloth'—whatever that might mean. But it was from the saying of masses for the dead that the parish priests derived the chief part of their pay for work done. The devout Catholic would deny himself the necessaries of life to have masses said for the soul of a father, or mother, or wife, or child, who, he was told, was tormented in purgatory; just as the devout Catholic does still. The clergy had also their offerings at the great festivals—their Candlemas offerings, their Michaelmas offerings, their Christmas offerings. There were yet other ways of making money to which some of the clergy, especially the friars, resorted. They hawked about

the country relics and indulgences, and cajoled simple-minded people to give them their hard-earned money for a rotten bone or a piece of useless parchment. Last of all, the begging friars, though in possession of the finest churches and largest estates, went about with their wallets begging an alms for Jesus' sake.

Thus while the pre-Reformation Church had its lands and tithes, originating in voluntary bequests, it had also a considerable revenue derived from free-will offerings, and fees paid for religious offices performed. The main part of this enormous wealth went to the bishops, and abbots, and priors, and monks, who did nothing; while the parish priests, who did the work, were often very poorly paid.

When the Church began to show signs of approaching dissolution, the hungry eyes of the reforming barons were fixed on its fair lands and tithes, as the eyes of the carrion crow are fixed on the dying sheep or deer. It was plain from the first, that if there was to be a reformation of religion, it would be followed by a scramble for the Church's wealth. With noble disinterestedness, the reforming clergy asked only for a decent maintenance for themselves, and proposed that the remainder of the Church's revenues should be devoted to the support of the poor, and the education of the whole youthhead of the country, the very purpose for which the tithes and lands had originally been given. This patriotic proposal was embodied in the petition which the reforming ministers presented to the Estates in 1560; it was again embodied in the First Book of

Discipline, and the plan worked out in detail ; and if it had been adopted by a patriotic parliament, we would have been saved at this day from three of our heaviest taxes, our poor rates, our education rates, and our church rates, of various kinds, voluntary and otherwise. But there was not a spark either of patriotism or piety in most of the reforming barons and gentry. They were looking only to their own personal or family aggrandisement, and in the end they managed, by various processes, to appropriate the bulk of the Church lands, and a portion of the teinds. The throne was weak, law was in abeyance, the country was torn by contending factions, might became right ; and Knox might protest against the sacrilege as he pleased, he might denounce his late coadjutors as thieves and robbers ; they did not much care, they had clutched the Church's patrimony, and they were determined to keep it, and they have kept it down to this day.

But it was seen that some arrangement must be made for the ministers of the reformed faith, which had now become the national faith. Two-thirds of the benefices were secured to the old clergy for life ; and the remaining third was to be applied, first as stipends to the new ministers, and afterwards to replenish the queen's impoverished exchequer. 'Here,' said Knox, 'I see two parts freely given to the devil, and the third part divided between God and the devil.' The 'thirds,' according to the returns of the beneficed clergy, amounted to £72,491, and of this only £24,231 was assigned to the clergy—only £24,000 out of a revenue exceed-

ing £250,000!¹ 'Who would have thought,' said Knox, 'that when Joseph ruled Egypt, his brethren should have travelled for victuals, and have returned with empty sacks.' 'Oh happy servants of the devil, and miserable servants of Jesus Christ, if after this life there were no heaven and no hell; for to the servants of the devil, these dumb dogs and horrid bishops, to one of these idle bellies ten thousand was not enough, but to the servants of Christ, that painfully preach the gospel, a hundred will suffice.' The barons had their sneers while Knox was indulging in his fierce invectives. 'We may now forget ourselves,' said Maitland of Lethington, 'and bear the barrow to build the house of God.' 'If these preachers had their way, the queen would not have enough to buy herself a pair of shoes.' In the midst of all these troubles, it seems never to have occurred to Knox that he had better renounce the endowments of the church for ever, and cast himself on the voluntary offerings of the people. Poor, blind man!

It is sometimes said that the State at the Reformation *gave* the teinds of the old church to the new church. Such a remark is founded on misconception. There was no new church; there was only the old church reformed. Neither did the State give the teinds to the Church (they were not its to give), it only acknowledged that they were still the Church's patrimony, and enforced the payment of a portion of them to the clergy. Our educational institutions are at present undergoing reform, and

¹ This is Scots money, but the £1 Scots then was equal, in purchasing power, to the £1 sterling now.

the endowments of many of them are being applied differently from what they previously had been ; but no one says the State is giving these endowments, or speaks of them as being national property. They are educational endowments still.

The £24,000 might have been sufficient for the maintenance of the Protestant ministers for a time, for as yet there were not many of them, but their stipends, such as they were, were irregularly paid, and in every General Assembly there were loud complaints because of this. In 1564, the Assembly petitioned the queen that some sure provision should be made for the ministers, and that to this end the fruits of every parochial benefice should, on the occurrence of a vacancy, be conveyed to the minister, together with the manse and glebe. Nothing came of this. In 1567, Moray, the friend of the Reformers, was Regent, and much was hoped from him, for much had been promised. There was partial disappointment again, for the disestablishers were not yet satiated with plunder. An act, however, was passed, proceeding on the preamble that the ministers had been long defrauded of their stipends, and had been reduced to poverty, and could no longer continue in their vocation unless some remedy were provided. Surely a humiliating confession for the barons to make ! Seven years ago they were burning with a holy zeal for the pure evangel, and now, by force or fraud, they were grabbing the church lands and lifting their rents, while the clergy were starving. The only remedy provided was, that the stipends of the ministers were

made the first charge upon the 'thirds,' and it was declared that the arrangement was to last only till the kirk should come into the full possession of its proper patrimony, the teinds. Thus the Scotch parliament acknowledged that the teinds were the proper patrimony of the kirk; and that act has never been repealed, so that in law, as well as in moral right, the teinds are the inheritance of the Church. Nevertheless it is true, and pity 'tis 'tis true, the Church has never possessed them since the Reformation.

It would be beyond my line of lecture, to describe all the various processes by which the Church was stripped of its property. An abbot now figured as a Lord of Election, and drew the revenues of the abbey without discharging the duties. Lords and lairds had influence enough at court to get grants of bishops' lands which lay contiguous to their own. The old ecclesiastics, while still in possession, gave long leases of lands and tithes to their relatives, and these relatives afterwards managed to get these leases converted into perpetuities. While the church property was thus in a state of flux, belonging to nobody, but ever flowing more and more toward the courtiers and their kin, King James at last awoke to the fact, that something must be done if anything was to be saved. Accordingly, in 1587, an act was passed annexing the temporalities of all benefices to the crown. This act did not apply to the teinds, they were still sacred; but it had the effect of secularising all the ecclesiastical lands in the kingdom. It was intended that the rental should be applied to increase the revenues of the crown, but

James's easy temper led him to give away thoughtlessly what he could not at once enjoy himself, and he gave not only lands, but teinds which were not his to give.

All the world knows how Charles was bent on conforming the Church of Scotland to the Church of England. He knew he could not do that without money, for bishops, and deans, and prebendaries require to be paid handsomely, and a choral service cannot be maintained for nothing. He bitterly regretted that his father had wrecked the church revenues by his prodigality; he knew his father had long been talking of undoing what he had foolishly done, and, accordingly, in the very first year of his reign, he resolved to revoke his father's grants, so far as that could be legally done; and it would appear the crown lawyers had advised him that it might be done. This royal resolution caused a violent flutter among one half of the Scotch nobility and gentry. They had got the church lands and teinds, and they were determined to keep them. They sent deputation after deputation up to London to remonstrate with his majesty, but his majesty was resolute, and let them know that if they did not submit he would have the question tried at law, and it would be worse for them in the end. When they found there was no other way of it, they yielded, but with a grudge—a terrible grudge. Some say this was the true origin of the troubles which followed, and it is certainly curious that while the nobles had, with much suppleness of mind, become Episcopalians at the bidding of James, they became flaming Presbyterians again under Charles, when the church lands

and teinds were needed to support the status of the bishops.

The king had let all the holders of church property understand that if they submitted the whole matter to him, he would make arrangements which would in many respects be to their advantage. Under this pressure all interested gave in submissions—the Lords of Erection and their tacksmen, the bishops and clergy, and the commissioners of burghs. The king thereupon issued four decreets-arbitral, corresponding to the four submissions, which were afterwards sanctioned by parliament, and these form the basis on which valuations of teinds were made which subsist down to the present day. It were out of place for me to enter into all the details and legal technicalities of this settlement, but I may note the following leading principles :

1. Every heritor was to be entitled to buy the teinds of his lands from the titular who held them.

2. The fifth of the rent was to be regarded as equivalent to the tenth or teind of the produce, and nine years' purchase of the valued rent was to be the price paid for the teinds.¹

3. All lands and teinds were to be valued, and commissioners and sub-commissioners were appointed for this purpose, and the valuation then made was to be the valuation for all time.

4. The right of the heritor to purchase was not to apply to bishops' teinds which had become vested

¹ Under later legislation, teinds not heritably disposed were made over to patrons who were obliged to sell at six years' purchase—an act of injustice to the Church.

in the crown, nor to teinds appropriated to colleges or hospitals, or otherwise destined to pious uses.

5. All these provisions were subject to the condition that the teinds, in every case, must, first of all, be employed to provide a suitable stipend for the minister of the parish. Under this burden they were to be sold and bought.¹

In order to understand this arrangement, you must know that in pre-Reformation times, the parson or his tacksman was accustomed to draw his teind—every tenth sheaf—as it stood on the harvest-field. The farmer dared not remove the grain till it was teinded, and an off-putting parson might cause great loss in a rainy season by not lifting his sheaves in good time. After the Reformation, the titular or layman who had got a grant of the teinds, had the same rights as the parson formerly had; and all accounts agree that he was more merciless in the exercise of them. It was now arranged that every landowner might buy his own teinds, and that thus he and his tenants would be freed from all outside interference at harvest-time. He must pay the valuation price to the titular—whose right of property, however unjustly acquired, was thus acknowledged—but having paid the price, the teinds became his.

In this arrangement the right of the parish minister to the parish teinds was set aside. That right was founded upon original gifts which had never been disputed; upon four hundred years' continuous possession; and upon the Act of 1567, which

¹ It was mainly on account of this burden the teinds were sold at the low valuation of nine years' purchase.

acknowledged that the teinds were the proper patrimony of the Church. But this absolute right to the teinds on the part of the clergy was now ignored. They had been given away, though illegally, and Charles did not feel himself strong enough to wrest them out of the hands of the possessors, and restore them to the proper owners. But though the teinds were not restored to the parish minister, they were burdened with a suitable stipend to the parish minister. His claim upon them was put before all others; but it was merely the claim of a pensioner to a portion of what was rightfully his own. According to the arrangement of 1629-33, the heritors of Scotland, in so far as they became titulars, are now the owners of the Church's teinds—they bought them and paid for them—subject, as I have said, to the burden of the parish minister's stipend. Accordingly, in strict law, and if strict faith were kept with the heritors, the disendowment of the Church would simply amount to the relieving them of this burden. If the stipend were exacted without 'the benefit of clergy' being given in return, it would be a breach of equity as well as of law.

As I have already said, commissioners were appointed to value all the lands of the kingdom, or rather to ascertain their rental, and the fifth of this rental, as then ascertained, was to constitute the teind in all time coming. Most of the landholders, accordingly, got their lands valued and their teinds fixed, but many others, especially of the smaller proprietors, neglected to get this done, and the result has been disastrous to them. A fifth of the rental of land, two hundred and fifty years ago, was

very different from what it is now—probably not the tenth or the twentieth part of it. When one hears of the fifth of the rental of all the lands of Scotland being set apart as a fund, out of which the stipends of the clergy were to be paid, one's natural conclusion is, that here there is not only an ample but a magnificent provision, to maintain the Presbyterian ministers like princes. A fifth of the whole rental of the country! What more could clerical avarice desire? And yet true it is, that the whole fifth of this rental is now absorbed in stipend in the majority of the parishes of Scotland, and in many cases that stipend does not amount to £150, in some cases not to £100, in some not to £50. There are properties of five thousand acres which, in 1629, were declared—truly or untruly, who shall now say?—to have a rental of only £40, which have now a rental of upwards of £3000. The proprietor in that case pays only £8 a year as stipend to his minister; while probably his neighbour is a small proprietor of twenty acres, which have been valued recently, and the rental ascertained to be £60, and, accordingly, he pays £12. Why wonder there is grumbling at such prodigious inequalities? more especially when it happens, as it very often does, that the great proprietor—thanks to the foresight of his factor and his agent two hundred and fifty years ago—escapes by paying a mere trifle, while the small proprietor, whose ancestor had no factor or agent to look after his interests, is made to bear the main burden of the minister's stipend.¹

¹ The whole stipends drawn out of the teinds at present amount to about £200,000—their value having been lessened by the fall in the

The plain intention of the decreets-arbitral was that all should pay equally according to the rental of their lands. And why should not the inequalities which time has made be now rectified? Why should not the present valuation roll be the rule for all. The stipends of the clergy need not be larger than they are at present, unless in some exceptional cases; but the burden of them should be more equally distributed. As a compensation for such a concession on the part of the heritors who have old valuations, the clergy might concede that a tenth or even a twentieth, instead of a fifth, should hereafter constitute the teind. If such an arrangement were made, and legislatively sanctioned, no landowner would feel the burden of the minister's stipend; all would bear it equally, and therefore without the bitterness which the present inequalities sometimes create: the vexatious and expensive litigations about valuations and localities which are frequently ruinous to all parties concerned, would cease; and heritors and ministers, now frequently at variance, would lie down together in peace, like the prophetic lion and lamb.

The teinds of every parish are confined to itself, and cannot be used for another parish—so have the law courts ordained. Thus it happens that one parish may have more than enough of teinds for all its wants, and the neighbouring parish be sorely in need of them. It was at one time held that price of grain. The teinds not yet applied to the payment of stipends (called unexhausted teinds), amount to about £130,000 yearly, but in many parishes it is a question whether the teinds are exhausted or not. There are 880 parishes in Scotland, the stipends of which are drawn mainly from teinds.

when a stipend was once fixed, it could not afterwards be augmented ; but the House of Lords, by a most righteous decision, overturned that notion, and now a clergyman, in whose parish there are unexhausted teinds, may apply to the Court of Teinds at the end of every twenty years for an augmentation to his stipend, and generally he gets it. He well may, for it is a long time to wait for it. Up till 1808 it was usual for the heritors to deliver their victual stipend in kind, and in most manses there was a granary (or girnel) for its reception, but according to an act passed in that year victual stipend is now converted into money, and paid according to the highest prices of the county fiars, in other words, according to the average price which good grain has brought in the open market. Beyond all question there is great convenience in this arrangement ; but most parish ministers think there might be improvement in the way in which the fiars are struck, so as to give them a truer average value of the price of grain over the whole year. Of course, the recent enormous importations of grain, and the consequent fall in grain prices, have lowered the stipends of the Scottish clergy by about twenty-five per cent., but they must be content to suffer, and find what comfort they can from the thought that others are rejoicing.

Within the last fifty years upwards of three hundred and fifty new parishes have been endowed in Scotland, mainly by contributions from the members of the Church, and the process of forming new parishes, and of endowing them, is still going on ; and if the next half-century should do as

much as the last, the number of newly endowed parishes will be nearly as numerous as the old. As the endowment in these cases is almost always small (generally £120), the congregation supplement the minister's stipend according to their ability, the stipends ranging from £200 up to £1000. In many of the old parishes also, where the teind stipend is inadequate, the congregations are awakening to a sense of their duty, and adding to the stipends of their ministers. Thus, inside the Established Church, there is a combination of endowments and voluntary offerings.

In the Catholic Apostolic Church, it is an article of faith that tithes are of divine origin and perpetual obligation, and every member is expected to contribute a tenth of his income toward providing benefices for ministers. Though the payment is regarded as morally obligatory, it is not compulsory. There is no inquiry as to how much any one gives, far less any scrutiny, but every Sunday the gift is made, as a free-will offering to the Lord, and the system is found to work well. Among the Methodists there is a similar belief. In all the churches there are individuals who hold the same opinion, and annually give a tenth of their all to the church or the poor. It is to be feared the number of these is not great; but strange to say, some are to be found in anti-state churches; and anti-state church ministers have been known to preach the duty of paying tithes—to them.

It is not necessary for me to explain the methods which are employed in dissenting churches, for raising money to support religious services; as that

will be done in a future lecture. Suffice it to say, that every conceivable method is resorted to. Seat-rents, monthly or quarterly contributions, and collections made at the church door, are the most usual methods in Protestant congregations. The Roman Catholic priest charges fees for performing the offices of his religion; and the ill-paid Lutheran clergy in Hamburg, and other parts of Germany, do the same, often with the result that people dispense with the offices of religion altogether. A vestige of this exists in England, where some of the curates (and even of the incumbents) are partly paid by fees, which they do not ask, but which they nevertheless expect. In many cases, where the people are poor, the support of a minister and a religious service becomes a very heavy tax upon them, but it must be told that in general they bear the burden bravely. We may think them mistaken in their notions, but we cannot but admire their conscientious liberality, and believe that many inside the Church might learn a useful lesson from them. It used to be thought that 'the glorious principle of an Established Church' was that people did not require to give; but now it is being felt that this is a very inglorious principle, the principle of the mean and the miserly, and that churchmen as well as dissenters are bound to do what they can, and give what they can for the promotion of every good cause. But, within the Established Church, 'to the poor the gospel is preached,' 'without money and without price.'

ERRATA IN LECTURE IV.

Page 112, fourth line from bottom, *for* 'showed' *read* 'shown.'

" 144, eighth line from top, *for* 'made' *read* 'paid.'

" 153, fifteenth line from top, *for* 'mass' *read* 'masses.'



ST GILES' LECTURES.

SIXTH SERIES—THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

LECTURE IV.

THE PAROCHIAL SYSTEM.

By DONALD MACLEOD, D.D., Minister of the Park Parish, Glasgow ;
and one of Her Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland.



WHEN viewed in reference to its fitness for fulfilling the mission of the gospel among the people, the feature which distinguishes the Church of Scotland from the other ecclesiastical agencies around it is its parochial system. It is through this system it seeks to reach the entire nation, and it claims for it a superiority over all others. In this practical age, no matter can appear more important than whether the instrument employed is, or is not, the most suitable for the special end in view. If it commends itself as giving the most promise of efficiency ; if its history corroborates that expectation ; and if it can be shown that any failure which can be pointed out has not arisen from the system

but from inattention to its essential conditions, then a case shall have been made for its authority, which cannot be endangered by any theories which rest on less substantial bases. Whatever theories may be advanced by Voluntary or High Churchman respecting the constitution of the church as it existed in primitive times, or between the competing claims of various orders of the clergy, yet, the test which men will really be swayed by is the experimental one.

Our own views as to the perfection of any ecclesiastical organisation are founded on the justness of this test. We do not believe that Presbytery, Episcopacy, or Congregationalism can claim any exclusive divine authority. God has undoubtedly appointed a government in his church whereby everything shall be done 'decently and in order;' but if it had been essential that any particular order of clergy should remain permanent and have divine appointment, or if divine grace had been attached to the instrumentality of that order, so that it alone can be recognised as the channel whereby God promises to convey grace, then we would be warranted to expect the clearest statements to that effect in the Word of God. The conception of blessing being meted out on such principles is so arbitrary, that the evidence of its truth must be indubitable ere it can become credible. We would also be compelled, in harmony with such a belief, to look for corresponding results in actual experience. If we were told that rain fell only on certain fields, we would expect to see those fields different from all other fields; and if divine grace is by covenant bestowed only on those flocks which enjoy a certain

ecclesiastical machinery, we would be equally warranted to expect the fruits of such privileges in actual life. But when we apply these tests to the cases in hand, we discover that none of them can bear the trial. So far from there being any express statements in the Word of God, clear and unmistakable, we find that there is the greatest diversity of opinion among the best scholars and the advocates of various systems, in regard to what it is that Scripture enjoins. Or if we turn to the test, 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' and attempt to judge by results, he would be a rash man who would dare to say that there is any branch of the Church of Christ which enjoys a monopoly of covenanted grace.¹ But the question of the Orders of the clergy does not enter into the subject before us.

¹ We are glad to notice this principle admitted by Bishop Wordsworth in his recent charge, and we acknowledge the fairness with which he attempts to do justice to the Christian life and sanctity outside of the churches which retain the Three Orders. He fancies, however, that he discovers within the fold of the Episcopal Church a kind of fruit which he asserts does not exist in those communions which hold Presbyterian principles. That fruit is unity. There is unity, he says, among Episcopalians, and schism and division among the representatives of other forms of ecclesiastical government. But even this test lamentably fails when it is applied to that system which he advocates. He forgets that schism, as used by St Paul, did not refer to dissent in the modern signification, but to the existence of party spirit within the Church. That being so, it may be asked whether there are no such 'schisms' within the Church of England. Ritualist and Evangelical, High Church and Broad Church, would, according to St Paul, be typical 'schisms.' Again, what does he make of the separation of the Anglican, Roman, Greek, Coptic, Armenian, Maronite, and other churches, which all enjoy the blessing of the Three Orders, and yet excommunicate one another with as great keenness as ever disgraced any sect in any land? Does he forget also that while there has been large dissent from the Anglican Church, yet those who left it have

The parochial system is in operation over Europe ; the comparisons we shall draw are, however, not between different forms of parochial organisation, but between that which has been adopted by the Church of Scotland, and the non-parochial methods advocated by the Voluntaries in our own land. It is as a Scottish question that we intend to regard it ; and the position which we are to maintain is—That the endowed territorial system is the most efficient which has hitherto been devised for securing the greatest possible benefit to the people.

If we put out of view the important element, vital to any system, which touches the character of the persons who are to carry it out, there are two general conditions which are essential to the due efficiency of the parochial system, and without which it cannot be fairly tested.

First, the parish must be of such a size in extent and population as shall make it possible for the minister to take personal cognisance of every family in it, so as to bring all needful Christian influence to bear upon them.

Secondly, the parish church and the services of the parish minister must be at the free disposal of the parishioners ; the accommodation provided in the former, and the time and labour of the latter, being devoted, not to the general community, or to a congregation gathered from the general neighbourhood, but to a particular district and to the persons

seldom showed any loyalty to the system they had abandoned ; while, on the contrary, those who have seceded from the Church of Scotland have generally, with unshaken steadfastness, upheld Presbytery ? Though separate, this bond of unity has never been broken.

residing in it. In other words, the territory attached must be of workable size, and the endowments provided must be adequate. These are the conditions which it was the intention of the Reformers to secure; these are the principles which lie at the foundation of the National Church.

History of the Parochial System.—The origin of parishes is involved in considerable obscurity. The word ‘parish’ is derived from the term *παροικία*, applied to those communities like the Jewish or Christian, which were ‘sojourning’ in foreign cities.¹ The cities were the original centres of Christian influence. The country districts and villages were the last to be reached.²

The city churches thus became mother-churches, from which preachers and missionaries went forth to evangelise the neighbourhood. This recognition of outlying stations probably led to the attachment of the word ‘parish’ to a particular territory, and from such usage it gradually came to be applied in its modern sense to all the districts embraced in the larger province, which assumed the title of diocese. Originally both words were synonymous, but the course of events, and the development of ecclesiastical government, led to the distinction which still prevails. Like many other growths which, in ecclesiastical and social as well as in physical life, follow the law of evolution, the establishment of the diocese and the parish over Episcopal Europe was determined by the requirements of the times, and was the product of practical statesmanship.

¹ See Bampton Lecture by Dr Hatch.

² Hence the name ‘pagan’ (*paganus*) or villager.

The rise of the parochial system in Scotland cannot be fixed with more than approximate accuracy. It was in all probability after this fashion:—

The conversions which followed the preaching of the early missionaries were tribal. Society was so completely organised into tribe and clan, that no one could reach the individual without gaining the attention of the tribe. Just as at the present day, it would be impossible for a stranger to gain access to a single Arab without being brought into court before the whole tribe, so was it in Scotland. When the chief embraced Christianity, he carried an influence similar to what he exercised in secular affairs. The tribe followed him in his faith, as they did in war. When, therefore, any chief accepted Christianity, the teachers to whom he looked for religious instruction would naturally labour within the territory over which he had authority. The territory of the tribe would thus become practically the parish assigned to the missionaries. Their support also would naturally be defrayed by the representatives of the land within which they laboured.

Closely connected with this was the influence exercised by the monasteries. The abbey with its community was the earliest ecclesiastical system in Scotland. The abbots came long before the bishops. As, therefore, any monastery gained a special influence over the tribes which had received spiritual benefit from its preachers, it became enriched with delegated authority, and with the gifts of various kinds which gratitude assigned to them. A link thus grew up of the closest nature between each monastery and the

extensive tracts of land over which it had gained influence. The monasteries, or the first churches established by them, thus became mother-churches, having a large number of charges dependent upon them. These charges must have raised the question of the district to be assigned to each, and through this establishment of districts the way was prepared for parishes.

When the feudal system came into force in Scotland in the time of King David, a further stimulus was given to the territorial principle. This was not because King David gave commanding authority to Romanism, and with it to the ecclesiastical arrangements which prevailed in Italy and Gaul, but that feudalism, with its clearly defined links of connection between the superior and his vassals, served to fix the relationships between certain localities and their priesthood. As in England, where the feudal system existed for a longer period than in Scotland, the Manor was the ecclesiastical as well as civil centre of authority, so when in Scotland the baron took the place of the old chief, he naturally cared first for the interests of his vassals. From the Manor, with its chapel and resident priest, representing the will and influence of the Church, there arose the desire to provide for the spiritual necessities of the hamlets and townships within the district which owned the authority of the same superior. The effect of this was to crystallise church organisation in certain localities, and to create parishes. We can trace this process in some parts of Scotland, and very markedly in the eastern counties, where the tribal land changed into that of

the thane, and afterwards came under feudalism. The old mother-church of Celtic times went over to the Thaneage, and these mother-churches again passed, later on, to the Manor. When the feudal possessor desired to supply the wants of a district, or to show his reverence for a saint, he established here and there chapels subsidiary to the ancient church connected with his estate. In the course of time the chapelries thus founded grew to be independent parishes. 'A striking illustration of this is to be found in the extensive territory in Aberdeenshire which formed the manorage of Kintore. There we find first a mother-church, Kinkell (*ceann chille*, the head or chief church), with its dependent chapels—Dyce, Kinnellar, Kintore, Kenmay, Minkeigie, and Skene.'¹ With one exception, all of these remain to the present day as parishes. These instances, to which many similar could easily be added, indicate how naturally the subdivision of the country into parishes arose. They were not created by king or parliament. The legal erection of parishes was but the recognition of what previously existed. Nor was the parochial system an importation from the Continent, when Romanism supplanted the Celtic Church. The influence of the Roman priesthood may have served to give shape to the institution, but its origin was earlier, and its growth was the natural product of a long antecedent history.

By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the country appears to have been divided pretty thoroughly into parishes. At that period the Celtic Church had completely disappeared, and the Roman

¹ We are indebted to Mr Skene for this illustration.

Church had acquired undisputed authority. A complete pastoral supervision for the entire kingdom had been organised. Everywhere arose church and chapel. In lonely glens the sound of the bell calling to prayer, and the presence of a Christian priest, marked the advent of the greatest civilising power of the time. For many a day the influence of Romanism was beneficial; and that influence was rendered effective by the complete manner in which the parochial system extended it to the most remote glen and to the rudest tribe. The ruined walls of little kirks, which can still be traced on rocky islets and deserted straths in the far Hebrides, witness to the thoroughness with which Christian instruction, in the only form then known, was disseminated. It was not a cluster of voluntary adherents here and there which was attended to; it was the nation which was Christianised. The care of the Church embraced the entire body of the people, not according to their expressed desire, but according as their spiritual necessities revealed the need for Christian zeal.

At the time of the Reformation the country had become almost overchurched, and a dangerous preponderance of influence and wealth lay in the hands of the clergy. The monasteries and bishoprics had become enormously enriched. It has been computed that one-half of the entire wealth of the kingdom belonged to the Church, and by far the greater amount of this was attached to the abbeys and cathedrals. We need not enlarge here on the manner in which that great wealth fell into the hands of grasping barons,

as that has been already described in previous lectures.

John Knox at once recognised the importance of the parochial system, which he found already existing, and adopted it as essential for the due organisation of the Reformed Church. He formulated a policy which was as magnificent in its statesmanship as it was noble in its patriotism. Those were days when strong men were required to mould the future of the country. It was the most critical epoch in the history of Scotland; and the master spirit God then gave to the nation was that of Knox. He was firmly convinced that the supreme law for man in every condition of life was the Word of God. The authority of that Word, according to him, must dominate all spheres of life. To obey the gospel was the duty of the nation, as well as of the individual. He believed there could be no security for the moral and spiritual health of the people, except they were thoroughly enlightened by education, and instructed in the Word of God. Every means must therefore be used to make intelligent religious conviction the basis of national life. He accordingly drew up the First Book of Discipline—using Discipline in its original signification of ‘training’—as a scheme for the Christian training of the entire populace. It was founded on the parochial system. If every man, woman, and child was to be reached, and the best instruction placed within their power, then the whole land must be divided into workable parishes, and the teaching by school and pulpit so distributed in those parishes, that not a household should be

left unsupplied. This territorial division was ready at hand, although it required modification to suit the exigencies of the time.

The territorial arrangement of parishes was not the only condition necessary for the accomplishment of the wise intentions of the Reformers. The support of the ministry and of the schoolmasters was quite as necessary. John Knox never dreamt of intrusting the success of so vast an undertaking to the voluntary offerings of the people; nor was there any cause for his doing so. The wealth of the Church afforded the prospect of abundant pecuniary resources. That wealth was of a two-fold character. There were the lands and heritages belonging to the monasteries and to the bishoprics, and there were the teinds, which were the property of each parish, and destined for the support of its own ecclesiastical establishment. Knox proposed that these funds should be devoted to the three following objects: (1) The support of the ministry; (2) Education; and (3) The poor and sick. For the ministry he asked no more than a decent sustenance, sufficient to place the preaching of the word, and the pastoral superintendence of the clergy, at the free disposal of every family in the country. Education was to be put on such a footing as existed in no country in the world. A parish school was to be erected beside every parish church, so that elementary instruction might be afforded to the whole youth of the land. There were to be Secondary or Grammar Schools also set up in suitable localities, to form centres for higher instruction, and to make an easy bridge between

the elementary school and the university. As the crown of the edifice, the universities were to be equipped as thoroughly as ample endowments and a well-considered curriculum could command. Bursaries were to be given for the aid of promising scholars during their entire course from the elementary schools upwards, so that the intelligent son of the poorest cottar might have a career opened for his ambition, and pass from the humblest parish school, through the higher Grammar or Secondary Education, to the University, with its efficient staff of professors. The last object connected with the parochial economy of Knox, to which these funds were to be devoted, was the support of the poor and sick.

This magnificent scheme for national religion, in the widest sense, was inseparable from the parochial system. It was by the careful allotment of the whole country into such workable divisions that no place could escape the beneficent influence of his proposal, that Knox entertained any hope of success. His grasp of the conditions necessary for the realisation of his patriotic views, was decided and strong. He held firmly his belief of how noble the life of the nation might be rendered, and he drew out in detail the method for its accomplishment. The causes of failure did not lie with the Reformer.

The number of parishes which existed at the time of the Reformation can be ascertained with some approximation to accuracy, and may be put down as approaching to 1100. The king assumed the responsibility of deciding the distribution of parishes to meet the new requirements when it was advisable

to unite one or two, or to divide them when an opposite course appeared better.¹ The evidence, however, goes to show that under the Romish Church the parishes, with their 'pendicles,' were more numerous than after the Reformation. This arose from the force of circumstances. The number of clergy which the Reformed Church originally embraced was very small. At the first General Assembly there were but six ministers, and although temporary expedients were applied to meet the emergency by the employment of Readers, Exhorters, and Superintendents, and by committing the oversight of several parishes to one minister, yet the tendency with such a weak staff must have been to reduce, rather than enlarge the parochial equipment. Any one familiar with the rural districts of Scotland must be aware of the existence of ruined churches scattered over districts where there is even now only one parish church. The parish of Kilmally in Inverness-shire, for example, now embraces what formerly had been five parishes. As years went on, the increase of parishes became greater; yet so slow was the movement, that it was not till 1772 that the island of Lewis, which has now six parishes, ceased to be one.²

¹ From 1561 to 1617, it was the sovereign in council who divided the parishes; from 1617 till 1707, that power was placed in the parliament, and its execution was fulfilled either by acts of parliament or by parliamentary commissioners. Since 1707, this authority has lain with the Court of Session. There is therefore no ground for the claim, first put forward in 1833 by the General Assembly, to divide and erect new parishes *proprio motu*, and without interference by the civil court. See Duncan's *Parochial Law*.

² In 1567 there were 287 Ministers for 1080 churches, with 151 Exhorters and 455 Readers; in 1581 the work of reduction of parishes had brought the number down to 924, and even then the supply of

During the eighteenth century little progress was made. The period was one of great spiritual deadness over Europe. It was the age of Voltaire abroad and of the Deists at home. The church was naturally affected by the prevalent tone, and the reign of Moderatism, whose faults have been exposed to an exaggeration, was the reflection of the age. The coldness of the clergy and the secular tone of the nation produced indifference regarding the religious wants of the country. At the beginning of this century, again, the people were so absorbed by the interests of the great naval and military wars, that all other considerations were laid aside. It was not till peace was restored, and the commercial prosperity of the country entered on an epoch of progress, and when great industries attracted masses of the population to the manufacturing centres, that the inadequacy of the existing parochial agencies became apparent. Coincident with this increase of prosperity came the excitement of the Reform Bill, which awoke the nation to a new political life. It was also the time of the great Evangelical Revival, and the Church of Scotland abundantly shared its quickening influence. It was impossible that, when thus roused to a sense of its responsibilities, the country could remain indifferent to the lamentable inadequacy of the existing parochial system to meet the enormously increased population. Chalmers,

qualified ministers was so inadequate, that it was proposed to reduce the total number of parishes to 600. This, however, was not done, for in 1596 we find that there were 970 churches, but of these no fewer than 400 were vacant.—*Laing's Introduction to Wodrow's Miscellany.*

became the apostle of the new era. Grasping, as no one else had done since the Reformation, the true idea of a National Church, and expounding the advantages of the parochial economy with an eloquence which stirred the enthusiasm of the whole community, he at once set about the restoration of a complete parochial equipment for the country. Great cities had grown up where at the time of Knox there were hamlets; populous towns were being thickly strewn around the quickly increasing erections of commercial enterprise; mining villages were rising almost in a night. The supply of ordinances for all these masses was terribly deficient. While the population of the country had trebled, few additions had been made to its parochial system for three centuries. Chalmers proved that there was at least a million—more than a third of the people of Scotland—for whom there was no church accommodation whatever, even taking into account the existence of dissenting chapels, and with trumpet voice he called upon the Church to remove these evils. Not yet had the belief been accepted that the State has no interest in the religious welfare of the people, nor was it then deemed vain to look to government for help. The only task Chalmers called on the Church and people by their voluntary efforts to overtake was the increase of church accommodation. Should that be effected by the people, he held the State was bound to furnish the necessary endowments. This last condition was essential to the scheme; for he never contemplated an incomplete imitation of the ancient parochial

system. The people of Scotland responded nobly to the call of the great advocate of establishments. Within a short time he was able to report the completion of 222 churches. The time had therefore come when, according to his design, the appeal should be made to the State. But other movements intervened which unhappily withdrew the energies of the great churchman from his favourite work. The Ten Years' Conflict then reached its lamentable climax in the Disruption of 1843, and Chalmers, under the compulsion of events, was obliged to lay down the noble toil of many years in order to place the new Church of the Secession on the best possible basis. The blow, which the departure of so many of its most earnest ministers and members inflicted on the Church, seemed for a while overwhelming. Not only had the work of church extension been absolutely stayed, but the existing churches were, in a sad number of instances, left empty, and their parochial agencies, recently so active, were swept away. But it was when things were little better than at the darkest hour, that another son of the Church arose, not unworthy to be ranked beside Chalmers. Dr James Robertson summoned the Church to gird herself anew, and to complete the work of Chalmers by endowing the chapels that had been built by his endeavours. Dr Robertson—as great in Christian zeal as he was powerful in intellect, and whose patriotism was more distinctive than even his churchmanship—struck the note which restored the energies of the despairing phalanx who had clung to the national Zion in its hour of danger. Imperial legislation assisted

the movement by an Act which facilitated the erection of new parishes *Quoad Sacra*. That work, so splendidly inaugurated by Dr Robertson, has issued in the addition of more than 350 parishes to the endowed territorial system of the Church. This is a great gift to the nation, for the benefits thus provided are for the people, and in a shape which secures their perpetuity. Such is the story of the development of the parochial system.

The Merits of the Parochial System.—We have already defined the parochial system as that whereby the preaching of the gospel and the service of a gospel ministry shall be secured to every household and family in the country, by apportioning such a territory and population to a particular church as can be worked by the minister of that church; and also by the assignment, out of the teinds or from sources supplied by voluntary gift, of such support to the minister as will enable him to discharge the duties of his office with absolute freedom. In so far as the parochial system allots to the clergyman a particular district instead of a congregation, it differs from the system of the Voluntaries, which makes the congregation which supports the minister the prime sphere of his activity; and in so far as it secures an adequate endowment for maintaining the minister within the parish, it is distinguishable from the voluntary system, which makes the sustenance of the minister an affair of arrangement between him and the particular persons whom he may attract. An endowment without territory is also unsatisfactory. Chalmers illustrated this by the *regium*

donum bestowed on Presbyterian ministers in the north of Ireland, 'who are helped in consequence to congregate their hearers at lower seat-rents than would otherwise have been possible, but without any definite section of a territory being assigned to them, within the limits of which they might exert an ecclesiastical guardianship over one and all of the families.' Still further, the fact that the parochial system is established by law renders another advantage, inasmuch as it enables every citizen within the territory called a parish to recognise his right in the minister of the parish, and his claim to be considered in connection with its ecclesiastical arrangements. The parish minister and the parish church being placed there, not for the use of a particular number of people termed a congregation, but for the whole parishioners as such, places them legally in a position in which the advantages offered can be claimed by the poorest as well as the richest inhabitant. Similar blessings are secured to the State which possesses an Established Church, covering with its organisation every corner of the land. For, if the reason for State Education is the security afforded for the well-being of the nation in consequence of every citizen being taught the elements of knowledge, it surely is not less advantageous for a nation which, even in the most general sense, has a belief in God and Jesus Christ, to possess some security for the religious instruction and culture of the whole community. We are far from saying that without such a system religion could not exist. 'The word of God is not bound' to any system. Our

argument is to the effect, that if the most efficient instrumentality be looked for whereby the blessings of religion can be secured, with its accompanying results on the national character, there is none which can be preferred to the parochial system of the National Church.

The advantages of the parochial system, when thoroughly equipped, are many and obvious. We shall specify some of them.

(1) *Thoroughness.*—By thoroughness we mean its fitness for efficiently bringing the whole population under the power of the gospel. If we imagine the country mapped out into such workable districts, that each minister shall have an area of population which he can so overtake that every household can be reached by him, their circumstances inquired into, and his personal services and influence placed at their disposal, we have a method represented which common-sense must recognise as being thorough. The object of the supervision is to reach all. It may be that a large proportion of the persons to whom the minister stands in parochial relationship may not require him. They may be the respected adherents of other churches, and enjoying the full advantages of the Christian ministry of some other denomination. In this case, his duty is clear. He is not there to make proselytes, but, as the representative of the National Church, bound to consider the religious good of the nation, it is his duty to strengthen and encourage the good work done for the common religion by other faithful Churches. The adherents of other Churches will not mistake his attitude. They will recognise him

as one who belongs, not to a special congregation, but to the parish, and bound, as a public officer, to take cognisance of and to be on a kindly footing with all in it. That such is actually the feeling in regard to this matter we can ourselves testify, in common with every other parish minister who acts in this spirit. But there is in most parishes a number, sadly great, who are without the fold of all Churches. Sometimes extreme poverty, or, more frequently, religious indifference, or the influence of evil habits, has created a chasm between them and public ordinances. Even in rural districts this is the case. In towns and cities it is infinitely worse. The population may be reckoned by hundreds of thousands to whom it would make practically no difference had Jesus Christ never been born, or had no Christian Church ever been built. It is among populations like this that an endowed territorial system becomes of the highest importance. But it must be efficient in its arrangements. If instead of an area which can be thoroughly wrought, there is attached to a parish church a crowd utterly beyond the power of the minister to deal with; if instead of having the 1000 souls, which was the number John Knox deemed sufficient, or the 2500 which has in more modern times been contemplated, he is charged with the oversight of from 8000 to 10,000, then the parochial system cannot be held to have had a fair trial. Nor can it be regarded as satisfactory, should the financial arrangements be so like those of the Voluntaries, that instead of the church and the services of the minister being placed wholly at the disposal of the

parishioners, both are practically the property of the congregation which pays the seat-rents. We have then a state of things which displays few of the merits of the parochial system, and the outside world may be entitled to question whether an established church, worked on such principles, has any practical advantage over the voluntary church in its neighbourhood. And the people of these parishes have also every right to complain. There may be a parish church; but they cannot enter it except on sufferance, for the seats are filled with those who, gathered from any quarter, have paid their money, and acquired an exclusive title to occupancy. There may be a parish minister; but the demands of his numerous congregation are such, that it is only at odd times he can attempt door-to-door visitation. Unless the church and the services of the minister are strictly connected with a special territory, all the inhabitants of which form the special objects of pastoral care, and all of whom can claim accommodation in the house of God which has been assigned by the nation for their use, we can regard any possible failure of the Church to overtake the religious requirements of the people as attributable, not to the parochial system, but to its absence.

There was one point on which Dr Chalmers enlarged with immense power. He used to draw an important distinction between the principle of 'attraction' and that of 'aggression.' By the principle of 'attraction' he described the voluntary system, whether existing within the Established Church or not; and by the system of 'aggression'

he characterised the advantages of the parochial economy when properly observed.

It would be unjust, as well as uncharitable, to deny the good which is accomplished by churches whose principle is purely voluntary, and whose methods are those of 'attraction.' A minister is appointed to fill a voluntary pulpit. We may invest such a minister with all possible merits. He is full of zeal, learning, and eloquence. The fame of the preacher brings together a large and influential flock, from every part of the city or neighbourhood. His appeals awaken the conscience, and constrain the heart of those who attend. They show their appreciation of his services by voting him a handsome stipend. All the arrangements of worship are maintained with something more than sufficiency. The effect of such a ministry does not, perhaps, end with the congregation. It may be that the people whom he has collected represent the wealth and Christian worth of the locality. They give largely to missionary efforts. They perhaps maintain a 'mission hall,' and pay for the services of a missionary and Bible-woman to labour in some poor neighbourhood. Good is thereby effected; souls are converted, and saints edified. But there is nothing in such an arrangement to prevent this flourishing congregation being surrounded by lapsed masses, to whom the existence of the building, into which Sunday after Sunday there streams a crowd of eager worshippers, means something approaching indifference. The poor, huddled away in the lanes and by-ways of the neighbourhood, may perhaps be called upon to attend the 'mission hall' which has been erected for their benefit. They

may be the object of a persistent assault on the part of good people, who, by means of tracts and other well-intentioned endeavours, try to induce them to come to the 'hall;' but the whole arrangement partakes so much of the nature of a charity thrust upon them, that intelligent artisans and the independent sons of toil are too often disposed to resent the importunity. The services thus supplied are also not infrequently of an inferior nature. The 'missionary' is perhaps a raw student, who is busy at classes, and who, however sincere, accepts mission work as a means of support; or he is a 'probationer' with small experience, and naturally on the lookout for promotion. The people understand the meaning of all this. They are not within the operations of a regular ministry. The 'mission hall' is not 'their own church.' The locality and population may present problems calling for the wisest and most zealous agencies, but the case is such that only the services of the less efficient are secured; and the result is, that while (thank God!) some are gathered to the 'mission,' and while there is the pleasing spectacle of children and youths being instructed in the Bible and Catechism, yet as a whole the masses do not go to such services. 'The great unwashed'—the men who fill the foundries and workshops of the city—will not have that sort of agency. Those of them who, of their own conviction, desire ordinances, prefer going to some church, though they must pay for a seat, while the rest stand aloof and refuse to be 'missionised.' We have drawn a favourable picture of the church which depends on the power of 'attraction,' but it labours under the great

disadvantage that the congregation absorbs the attentions of its able minister, and he is powerless for making any 'aggression' on the wide domain of that which has been harshly termed 'the home heathendom of our land.'

In contrast with this, we would portray the efficiency of the parochial system. Let us imagine the same minister who has filled the voluntary church to be labouring as the minister of a parish. If he is true to his calling, he will regard his chief duty not to attract a crowd from every corner of the compass, but to devote his time and energy to the locality that has been assigned to him. His constant endeavour will be to fill his church out of his parish, so that the parishioners will recognise him as belonging to them, and his church as legally theirs. Such a man endowed with the power which, under another condition of things could attract crowds to his ministry, cannot labour in vain when he turns his whole strength to the social problems which the locality, given him to labour in, presents for his consideration. His energies will now be turned from 'attraction' to 'aggression.' When he goes down to the most careless or abandoned, he is entitled to expect a respectful admission. He does so not on the ground that he has any rights over the people, but because the people have rights over him; not because the parish belongs to him, but because he belongs to the parish; and if the parochial arrangements were as we hold they ought always to be, he should be able to point to the church as being freely open to every parishioner—a church where they have a legal right to a place. If it be other-

wise, his labour cannot avoid assuming an appearance of interested zeal. If, aback of his ministrations, there is the consciousness that seat-letting, however remote, is yet a possible object, then an element comes in full of injurious influences. On the other hand, the power of the parish minister is immense, who, as he goes from house to house, may be regarded by all and sundry as having no necessarily pecuniary or sectarian end in view. Nothing can be compared to it. Even the dullest and most indifferent cannot but regard, as wholly unselfish, the hours spent among them by one whose pecuniary position cannot be affected, and the continuance of whose church cannot be affected; whether he succeeds or fails, or, indeed, whether he labours or stands aloof. And we believe that the work of such a man cannot fail, if he goes from house to house and makes the personal acquaintance of every individual in his parish. By the friendly nature of his inquiries, by the real interest he takes in all that concerns the families, by his sympathetic attention when sickness or death has visited them, and by his proffered counsel and personal assistance in times of need, he will soon find how great is the influence he acquires. And that influence will not stop there. The instructions and exhortations of such a man will, in the longrun, find entrance, and by the blessing of God produce fruit. Never has the experiment been tried without such results being the consequence.

We express our belief that if the spiritual wants of the population are ever to be overtaken, if the terrible social problems which present themselves in

all our great cities, are to receive a solution at the hands of the Christian Church, it can only be by the revival of the efficient and thorough work which an endowed territorial system is alone fitted to furnish. It is of little consequence how the endowment is furnished, if it is only adequate, and so attached to a territory that the whole population within the limits of that territory may know that the minister and church are theirs. When we turn to the rural parishes, where the ancient arrangements are preserved in full efficiency, we can judge more accurately of their advantages. Through them the blessed result is secured, that there is no district, however remote, no glen, however solitary, which is not reached by the ministry of the gospel of Christ. This wide distribution is not left to the precarious support of funds depending on the varying zeal or ability of any particular period or association. It is maintained from sources that have been conserved for the purpose from old religious benefactions. Over the whole land there are churches assigned thereby, for the use of the population ; and beside the churches rise the manses, in which dwell the pastors whose labours are expressly secured for the benefit of every household within a given territory. When the minister goes from door to door and from hamlet to hamlet, he can do so on a footing which lends the greatest weight to his labours. He can, in the most literal sense, preach the gospel 'without money and without price,' and make himself the friend and adviser of the people, in a manner thoroughly unambiguous. The picture of what this relationship has done for centuries in our rural parishes is one on

which the Christian philanthropist may delight to linger. The tie which has bound the Scottish manses to the people, has been rich in social as well as religious benefit. A stream of kindly influence has flowed from them over the land, and even now—when there are many other agencies at work, and numerous congregations, gathered on the principle of attraction, in districts where, half a century ago, the parish church was the only place of worship—a work is being done by the ancient system which is quite special in its character, and that could not be removed without a serious blow being inflicted on what is most beautiful in our national life. Nor can we forget the testimony borne to the thoroughness of this old system, by the fact that there are hundreds of parishes that, in spite of all the zeal and munificence which has been the boast of voluntary churches, are yet left wholly untouched by any Christian agency except what is furnished by the Establishment.

(2) Closely allied to the merit of *thoroughness*, we claim for the parochial system that of affording *security for popular rights*. It is no breach of charity to deny that there is a similar security in congregations and churches where the question of pecuniary support, and the consequent importance and influence of wealth, are naturally connected. Where wealth is concentrated, the highest bid is given for the services of the ablest ministers. The poorer districts, if left to such a system, must learn to content themselves with 'their money's worth.' Again, a similar influence naturally attaches itself to those members of voluntary

congregations, on whom the rest chiefly depend for the payment of expenses. The power of granting or withholding the necessary funds is a very great one, and where it is exercised by persons who have strong wills and little consideration, it may, and often does become a petty tyranny, which is none the less irritating, because it may be latent rather than avowed. The parochial system, on the other hand, is democratic throughout. The livings granted to the clergy have nothing to do with the poverty or wealth of the locality. The poorest district may be able to offer as large a stipend, and secure the services of as able a minister as the richest. And not only is justice thereby being done to districts which would otherwise be at a disadvantage, but within the parish church there is an equal indifference to the rank and wealth of its adherents. The vote of the poorest carries as much weight in the selection of the minister as that of the wealthiest. No constraint can be brought to bear upon that vote from consideration of pecuniary losses to the congregation, should the richer members be offended. Each person knows that his rights are secured, and that the question is not what he can contribute, but whether or not he is a parishioner or member, and in virtue of such a qualification the poor man possesses as complete privileges as the noblest in the land. The Church thus bears the stamp which its history has impressed upon it ; for the establishment of the parochial system was essentially the work of the Scotch people. It was not imposed by parliament or by the crown, but was the demand of the nation ; and although many years had to pass before that

demand was fully granted and the law of patronage abolished, yet, now that all popular requirements have been conceded, the parishioners are as equal in the sight of the law as they are in the sight of God.

(3) The parochial system *secures a healthy independence for the minister.* His position and emoluments being guaranteed by law, he is free from the financial cares and responsibilities so frequently and painfully experienced by those whose pecuniary resources are contingent on the good-will of the people to whom they minister. He can make himself the servant of all without distinction, and can 'speak, exhort, and rebuke with all authority.' We would be sorry if, in affirming this as a merit of the parochial system, we should even seem to suggest that there cannot be a manly independence maintained by ministers of voluntary churches. We have known too many whose attitude has been brave, though exposed to the risk of pecuniary suffering, not heartily to acknowledge the nobility of such lives; but we are also bound to confess, with equal honesty, that we have known too many instances within the Church of Scotland itself, where the full benefits of the parochial system were not enjoyed, as well as in other communities purely voluntary, to have any doubt regarding the trials endured by high-souled and sensitive men, whose lives have been a long humiliation in consequence of their financial dependence. Were the secret history to be written of the experience of such pastors, it would form one of the most pathetic pages in biography. Their lot has perhaps connected them with what is termed 'a

struggling congregation,' it may be in a rural district, where there are few persons of education to assist or sympathise with them; or it may be in a city where, in the competition of the sects, every device in the way of novelty or advertisement has to be resorted to in order to attract hearers; and the minister, goaded by the terror of failure, or, worse still, by the indelicate urgency of office-bearers, is compelled to sacrifice his self-respect in order to avoid the disgrace, not of ministerial, but of financial failure. A strong man or a prosperous man may never know such pressure; a coarse nature may never feel its degradation; but for the refined, whose aims are high, the fact that commercial advantages should in any sense be mixed with the exalted purposes of the ministry, inflicts a trial which no language can exaggerate. Now, the system which can secure an immunity from these experiences must surely be beneficial for the clergy who enjoy its privileges. But the independence which the parochial system thus bestows is tempered by healthy checks. In the admirable economy of the Presbyterian system, no minister can ever be so independent that his self-will can dictate his ministerial conduct. In the parochial system, with its territorial endowments and its government under regularly constituted courts, a measure of independence is afforded every minister of the gospel, tempered by incumbent obligations, that is as perfect as could well be devised. It is freedom under law, and authority without license.

(4) *Permanence* is the next characteristic of the endowed territorial system to which we would draw

attention. The parish church and the services of the minister are inalienably attached to a particular locality, and cannot be taken away, except by a process in law, which affords ample pledge for the spiritual requirements of the people being safeguarded. It is only by an Act of parliament that any parish church can be removed out of its original parish, and the conditions under which such a change ever takes place are not consequent on alterations in the financial circumstances of the place, but in those of the population. The poor have thus a security for the continuance of the blessings of religion, although the tide of wealth may have flowed towards another district. Very different is the history of voluntary congregations, depending upon the presence of those who support ordinances. The tendency of those churches, as might be expected, is to follow the wealthy and to desert the poor. The accusation we bring is one which can be illustrated by facts which are as startling as they are suggestive. Not being bound by any endowment which confines their activity to a particular locality, those churches are at the disposal of their immediate supporters. There may in theory be a certain check lodged in the superior courts of these Churches, to which an appeal can be made by members who feel themselves aggrieved; but the question of future maintenance being essential, it is difficult, if not impossible, for any presbytery, not furnished with pecuniary resources, to forbid the action of those who can give or withhold the means required for the very existence of the church. The consequence is, that there are few great cities, experiencing

the fluctuations which determine the migration of families from one part to another, which cannot present numerous instances of the process we have described having been actually accomplished. It is now twenty-three years since a series of letters appeared in the columns of the *Standard*, which proved that in Liverpool, at that date, there were 50 deserted sites where once had been voluntary churches, and that 33 congregations had occupied, during their history, no less than 130 different sites! If we come nearer home, a similar condition is discovered. We do not profess to give a complete account of the movement of the voluntary churches in Glasgow during the last forty years, but it is sufficiently startling when we can point to at least 37 cases in which churches have been removed from districts which, in the course of municipal growth, had become poor. These churches—for we have purposely excluded those which have been rebuilt in the old neighbourhood or have become defunct—have followed the migration of their adherents to richer and more fashionable localities. The changes of population have not been so marked in Edinburgh as in Glasgow, yet that city likewise shows a similar record of change. This is an assertion which carries with it a most serious moral. It reveals not only how slight are the ties which bind the voluntary church to the locality in which it has been situated, when it can be so lightly moved to suit the convenience of its own adherents, but it also proves that its existence could never have been of much consequence to the locality, except in so far as its

membership may have resided there. It also shows that the system is one which cannot be depended upon for dealing with the masses, which require with the greatest urgency 'aggressive' measures. We feel, therefore, warranted in concluding that if there should be no distinction in the Church of God between rich and poor, and if the poor deserve to have secured to them as efficient and fully equipped a ministry as the rich, and if the security is to be so permanent as not to be affected by fluctuations of fashion and wealth, then the endowed territorial system is the only one which fully meets the case. A Sustentation Fund may be the best substitute, but even that, if we are to judge of its character after an experience of more than forty years in the Free Church, is open to objections which tell heavily against the poor, and against the minister whose people are unable to contribute their due proportion to its resources.

(5) *Cheapness*.—There are two ways in which money can be utilised. It may be capitalised, and the interest devoted to the purpose for which it has been granted. This is in effect the nature of all endowments. There is also the system of raising annually what is required for annual expenditure, which is the principle of Voluntaryism. In the former case, the effort falls on one or more generations to provide for generations yet unborn. In the latter, those who contribute have the satisfaction of enjoying in their lifetime the entire fruits of their beneficence. There is, however, always one department in the history of churches in which there must practically be endowment. Every building that is

erected, and the site and cost of which have been defrayed, represents so much capital stored for the benefit of those who shall reap advantages to which they have not contributed. However limited, the principle of endowment is necessarily adopted in such circumstances. But, without accentuating so small a point, let us compare the cost to a nation of ordinances supported on the system of endowment, and on that of voluntaryism. The life of a nation is not a question of any single generation; it is permanent; and every wise man who feels that he forms part of the national life, inheriting blessings which have come to him from the past, will feel bound to consider his duty as a citizen and a patriot in contributing to a national life which will continue when he has passed away. We must therefore take a broad view of the question of economy. We must not, like spendthrifts, consider what will be 'enough for our own day,' but look at the future, and weigh well whether our expenditure is of a nature which, viewed in the light of after-history, will bear the test of having been intelligent and unselfish. The principle of Voluntaryism, which may be briefly stated as 'Pay your own way, and leave it to others to pay for theirs,' has at all events the merit of clearness. It is strongly marked with the spirit of individualism, and has a commercial completeness in its axioms. The principle of endowment, on the other hand, makes a demand which may appear exorbitant; and were it necessary to call on the society of the present day to provide the entire endowments required for the future parochial economy of the nation, we are

aware of how preposterous such a proposal would be. But we are not dealing with circumstances like these. We have already benefactions, accumulated in the shape of capital destined for religious uses, and the comparison we institute is between the results which can be attained by a sum of money so utilised, and those which are gained by the annual expenditure of annual offerings. The comparison is one which happily admits of easy illustration, for we have before us a striking example of the two methods. There has, perhaps, never been a more brilliant exhibition of the power of Voluntaryism than that presented by the Free Church. The ability with which its finance has been conducted has been equalled only by the munificence of its members. The attention to details, and the importance attached to systematic organisation, which have marked its progress, have shown the utmost skill. During the first forty years of its existence, the amount raised for the support of the ministry, including the Congregational as well as the Sustentation Fund, has been at the annual average of £168,108, or representing a capital of £4,202,711, at 25 years' purchase. The number of ministers thereby employed has been on the average 867. Now the total number of original parishes connected with the Church of Scotland is 880, and the capital represented by the teinds may be calculated at £5,000,000. The capital, therefore, represented by both systems is approximately the same, but there is this enormous difference, that whereas in less than thirty years, a sum equal to the whole capital of the Established Church has been spent by the Free

Church, and has wholly disappeared, the same amount, when conserved in the shape of endowments, has secured the services of a greater number of ministers for three centuries, and still remains to continue their services for ever. The two systems, when thus compared, show the enormous advantages of endowment as being really the cheapest, when regard is made, not to the lifetime of a generation, but to that of a people. No course, therefore, could be more extravagant than to throw away accumulated resources which have remained, and which ought to remain, as the permanent source of spiritual benefit to the country. For in whatever light the cost of the voluntary system may be viewed, it is practically a cost to the nation. Those who have to pay are constituent parts of the nation, and to secularise funds which may be utilised for purposes which must be national as long as the nation is religious, can only be the transference of a burden, not its extinction.

We have hitherto considered the advantages of the endowed territorial system; but truthfulness compels us to confess the weakness of one class of endowed parishes. We have already acknowledged the patriotic work accomplished by Dr Robertson and his successors, who have added upwards of 350 *quoad sacra* parishes to the ecclesiastical equipment of the Church of Scotland. We can scarcely imagine what the condition of the Church would have been at this hour, had not that movement been urged with the enthusiasm and crowned with the success

which has characterised its progress. There are many directions in which we can recognise the merits of the *quoad sacra* parishes. The endowment of £120 a year, small though it be, has afforded no little advantage to the clergy, by giving them a certain freedom from that sense of complete financial subjection which has proved so galling to many a high-minded minister under voluntaryism. The *quoad sacra* minister also shares in common with the ministers in older parishes, the privilege of being legally at the disposal of every family within the territory assigned to him. He can act there, not as the mere representative of a voluntary association, but as one upon whose services the people have a legal claim. Still further, the *quoad sacra* parishes have the merit of putting the ecclesiastical position of the Church and congregation in a better position. The responsibility thrown on the minister and kirk-session of such congregations is healthy. The nature of this responsibility is one of the many wholesome characteristics of the parochial system; for when the minister finds himself placed in charge of an enormous parish, whose population has far outgrown the means of grace, he will feel bound to take a wide view of his position, and exert himself for the sake of the territory assigned to him. But when all this, and much more which might be stated, has been heartily acknowledged, there remains to be confessed a series of weak points connected with the new parishes, out of which have arisen serious practical evils. These weak points are unhappily not confined to the parishes purely *quoad sacra*. They also belong to the churches in

our great towns and cities that are attached to Town Councils or Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

(1) The first weak point we would indicate is that of seat-letting. Instead of the parish church being absolutely connected with the parish, as in the case of the older endowments, a parishioner has no right to claim accommodation in the *quoad sacra* church simply because he is a parishioner. We are aware that a clause in the constitution of these churches reserves a certain number of free seats, and also a proportion of the pews at a lower rent. But even these reservations are not restricted to the parishioners. An unwholesome distinction is, at the best, introduced between rich and poor, which has no existence in the old parishes, wherein locality, and not the power to pay seat rents, gives title to accommodation. The very existence of seat rents militates, in our opinion, against the freedom with which the minister can work among his parishioners. He cannot invite the families which attend no church to make full use of the parish church, for he knows that, however small the sums may be that are charged for seats—and they are sometimes not small—yet money payment is the condition on which a right can be acquired to accommodation, except the person invited is willing to go to the pews assigned for the poor—an alternative which able-bodied Scotchmen and Scotchwomen would be slow to adopt. The pleading of the minister cannot, therefore, be urged with perfect freedom, because he knows, and the people know, that the question of finance does enter into the matter. So far we

cannot vindicate the *quoad sacra* church as that of the poor. This evil is one which also belongs to those charges which are more or less dependent upon funds supplied by city and burgh corporations. In most cases these corporations have received full equivalents from the church lands that have been absorbed in 'The Common Good.' In Glasgow, for example, any cost which the city may have borne is not really a burden, but an expenditure for which value has been received. And yet so thoroughly are these churches looked upon in a commercial light, that the standard by which their usefulness is tested is the amount raised in the shape of seat rents, and the proportionate outlay which may consequently be spared to the corporation. The success of any city minister is accordingly judged, not by what he may do for the poor, the ignorant, or the indifferent, but by the number of pews that have been let.¹ 'Attraction' instead of 'aggression' becomes naturally the principle on which he is expected to labour.

(2) The result of this system on the work of the minister, is the next evil connected with our *quoad sacra* parishes. His labour assumes the character, inherent in all voluntary churches, of being in the line of 'attraction' rather than 'aggression.' If the

¹ We cannot produce better evidence of the level to which the public opinion referred to has actually sunk, than to refer to the letters and speeches which frequently appear in Glasgow newspapers, recommending the removal of this city church or that from the locality *where it does not pay, to some other where there would be a greater prospect of the Town Council deriving a larger revenue.* It was a similar spirit which evoked the indignant remonstrance of Chalmers in his day, and which made him appeal to the Christian patriotism of the people.

church belongs to the people who take seats and not to the parish, it follows, as a consequence, that the minister also becomes the minister of the congregation which he has attracted, and not the minister of the parish. There are many causes which determine this tendency. He has no control over the seats. He cannot use them for his parishioners. They are in charge of the managers of the church, on whom the serious business falls of guiding its financial arrangements, and of fulfilling the pecuniary obligations which rest upon them. Their desire generally is to deal handsomely by the minister. It is their interest as well as their pleasure to do so, for if they are to enjoy the services of a clergyman who will contribute to the success of the church, they must be able to offer as high inducements as possible. It is not in human nature that managers should be indifferent to the pecuniary prosperity of the trust committed to their care. They are glad, therefore, when a large congregation is brought together; but whether the seat-holders come from the parish or from places miles away from the parish, makes little practical difference. And the greater the congregational success, the more must the minister be congregationally rather than parochially occupied. It is impossible for him to overlook the families who have placed themselves under his charge. He must visit them at their homes, attend them in sickness, and be at their service on all occasions when he can be of any use to them. With a charge like this, and a pulpit to fill Sunday after Sunday, he will find more than enough to employ his energies. But if, in addition,

there also falls upon him a large share of public duties incident to the general business of the church, or to the charitable and other movements connected with the town or city where his lot is cast, what time can remain at his disposal for his territorial charge, with its visitation from house to house, and the many 'aggressive' measures which he may be longing to undertake? He soon discovers that it is only a maimed and utterly inadequate representation of the parochial system under which he now labours. He may remember what it was to work under the older and better arrangement, and experience pain at a contrast that does not arise from any change for the worse in his own social or pecuniary comfort, but from his preference for strictly parochial duties, with all the interest that attaches to free and untrammelled work for the good of a district.

The more boldly the fact is asserted the better, that *in most of our large cities the parochial system can scarcely be said to exist.* The Established Churches are worked practically on voluntary principles, because they lack a liberty which the old endowments secured for the old parishes. Certain advantages they still have over purely voluntary churches in their permanent connection with a locality, and in the small measure of independence which the endowments may bring. But the endowments are so small that the poorer districts cannot compete for the services of the best clergy, nor do they leave the clergy free to labour for the people as we find such services secured in country neighbourhoods. The richer

neighbourhoods thrive; the poorer, which require the best clergy the church can afford, are starved, or have to fight their hard battle, by every appliance which the modern 'bazaar,' 'sales of work,' and 'subscription lists' can suggest. It is because our city populations have so little experience of the benefit of the parochial system in its integrity, that they have shown themselves too ready to yield to the arguments of the Liberation Society. They have not the evident proofs of the Christian advantages of an endowed territorial economy which the country parishes can present. The argument from experience, so cogent in the counties, appeals with comparative feebleness in the towns.

It were well, however, that there were no worse consequences than those which have been indicated, but when we think of the hundreds of thousands in our great cities who are outside of all churches—the dense mass of human beings with whose spiritual and social condition scarcely an attempt is made to grapple—the necessity that arises for an adequate territorial system becomes one of the most pressing which the Christian philanthropist can consider, and the statement which we have ventured to make regarding the defects of the *quoad sacra* system, if true, become fraught with the gravest significance. Let us make every allowance for the agencies already at work within and without the Church. Do not let us detract from the good which may be accomplished by city and other missionaries, Bible-women, and visitors, many of whom are filled with a true enthusiasm. Do not let us depreciate the value of the volunteers, male and female, who

go down to the poorest and to the worst with the loving message of Christ, declared in many ways besides that of dogma. We know how much the community is indebted to them, and a thousand other agencies, for daily ameliorations of the worst conditions of society. But we would be untrue to our deepest convictions, if we did not proclaim our belief that, beneficial and numerous as these operations are, they do little more than *scratch the surface* of the great social problem. We are willing to attribute every excellency to them so far as they go, but they all labour under an inherent want of thoroughness—such thoroughness as a wise statesmanship would desiderate for overtaking similar evils in other spheres of social economics. In the case of education, the people are not left to the haphazard of volunteer philanthropists. Whenever the educational wants of our great cities were taken up, absolute thoroughness was insisted on. No distinction was admitted between rich and poor. The best schools and the best teachers were furnished for all classes of the community. The law brought its presence to bear on every district. Education—that best helpmate of true religion, as it is of civilisation—was placed on a foundation which secured its benefits to all. It is a similar statesmanlike thoroughness which we desire for the spiritual benefit of the people, and it is nowhere more required than in our large towns. We know that it is hopeless, in the present day, to call on the State to accomplish such a scheme; but we do call upon every Christian man wisely to consider whether any system can be devised which is better cal-

culated to overtake the evils we deplore than the endowed territorial system, by which the services of the best clergy can be secured, and their energies fully devoted to a locality, into every moral crevice of which they can bring the saving influence of the gospel to bear. We are not pleading in the interests of any particular sect. Personally, we would rejoice in seeing such a system embrace as much of the Christian life of the country as it is possible for it to embrace; but we do plead for a kind of work which we believe to be the only one that gives promise of adequate results. It was this large view of the requirements of a nation that was taken by Knox, and by all the Reformers, and the course of history bears testimony to the stream of blessing which has flowed from the parochial system they established, through the many generations that have since been born. Scotland owes more to its parochial system, and the character of Scotchmen has been beneficially moulded more through it, than any other influence which can be named. To the parish church, with its open door and its simple godly instruction, where landlord and tenant, peer and peasant, meet on the same level before God; and to the manse from which the minister has gone forth to carry to every household comfort and consolation—catechising the young, too, in the knowledge of the truth, as he always did before recent changes altered the admirable custom—we must attribute much that has been strongest as well as beautiful in the nation. The tie which bound minister to people—as disinterested on either side as it was sacred—and the associations which have linked manse and church

with quiet glens and lonely homesteads, have been objects on which moralist and historian may linger with justifiable satisfaction.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs.

That similar results will be attained if the same system, adequately represented, were applied to our large towns, we can entertain no doubt. It never has been fairly tried without proof being afforded of its efficiency. Chalmers demonstrated, by practical experiment, the truth of his eloquent vindication of our parochial economy. It is not to the failure of the parochial system, but to the absence of the parochial system, that we attribute the spectacle which now causes alarm to the Christian philanthropist, as he contemplates the mass which no church seems to be reaching, and no existing organisation seems adequate to overtake. And we cannot find words strong enough to express our astonishment at the madness of the proposal to destroy, and that too in the name of certain catch-words which sound religious, the organisation which, with all its defects, yet continues, in a thousand places and directions, the time-honoured and well-tried system which our fathers established. Who dare say that it will lend efficiency to the ministry if, instead of the system we have pictured, there shall arise one which shall cast the vulgarising element of finance, with its seat-letting and collecting-books, into every quiet parish, where now the pastor is labouring in peace for the good of the very poorest? How sad will be the change when he cannot enter the humble abode of shepherd or

ploughman—if indeed there shall be any minister in such retired spots at all!—without the consciousness that these poor men must henceforth pay for whatever pastoral duties he fulfils!

Churches in great cities, and the clergy who minister to the rich, may scarcely feel the change, but the revolution which would be effected over Scotland would be one under which the most needy would be the greatest sufferers.¹ What we require, instead of the secularisation of our endowments, is the supply of such resources as will give the parishioners everywhere OPEN CHURCHES and A GOSPEL PREACHED ‘WITHOUT MONEY AND WITHOUT PRICE.’

This is a subject in which every patriot has an interest. The basis on which, as a nation, our security rests, is not to be found in any adjustment of our secular relationships, however beneficial, but in the character of the people. The strong sense of duty which makes a nation invulnerable, and the convictions which insure obedience to authority, must have a deeper foundation than selfish utility or the cold requirements of the social contract. If many of the greatest crimes which ever disgraced humanity have been perpetrated in the name of religion, it is still truer that what has been most beautiful in our

¹ America is often quoted in disproof of such Cassandra forebodings, but America is yet a young country, and if we are to accept the testimony borne over and over by competent witnesses, the contrast which exists there between the city and the rural districts is as bad as anything we have pictured. The churches of the popular preachers are not only handsome, but luxurious; while the sufferings of the ministers in the outlying regions are, on the other hand, extreme. It is also noteworthy that there is a widely extended movement in the United States for the creation of a National Established Church.

humanity, and the virtues which have lent a glory to self-sacrificing patriotism, have sprung from religious conviction. The egoism which recognises no law higher than convenience must utterly disintegrate a population, as well as debase the individual. It is when each and all recognise responsibility to God and their common brotherhood in Christ, that we have the surest pledge of national greatness. In this sense we can say with Chalmers, that the national church which can inspire the loftiest convictions and the holiest motives is 'the cheap defence of a nation.' No Christian man will deny the importance of such influences. The extremest Voluntary shares as strongly as ourselves the belief that 'righteousness' alone 'exalteth a nation,' and that the 'people which honoureth not God shall utterly perish.' We differ with him solely as to the methods by which this desirable national character shall be formed and maintained. We have experience of a past which lends authority to our convictions regarding the efficiency of the particular system we advocate, and we have experience also of the consequences which have followed its withdrawal or curtailment. We are not prepared to cast to the winds the lessons which are thus taught, and to launch out on a new era, in the hope that some unknown, perhaps doubtful, benefit may result. The future of our country is too precious to be staked on a rash venture. Rather would we see in this, as in other departments of our history, what has been best in our past preserved, and applied with such adequate and wise changes as may make it most suitable for the future. If we have to decide questions which may affect genera-

tions yet unborn, do not let us be carried away by influences which come from passing interests and ephemeral disputes. Rather, in the spirit of the great men who three centuries ago looked beyond their present time, and devised measures which might secure blessings that would abide in the land they loved, let us weigh well what we now do. The destructive forces work rapidly, and it is easy to apply them. A rash act, stimulated by fleeting passion, may hurl into ruin the creation of greatest beauty and the fruit of the most patient skill. Let no such passionate rashness sway this generation in dealing with a system whose greatest fault, in the eyes of not a few of its assailants, has been its reviving efficiency and success. Rather let us look well into the future as into the past, and consider the inherent virtues of the organisation which lies at our hand. The security of this great empire is involved in the character of its children. Let us do our part, that not in our day alone, but that as the years roll on,

A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved Isle.



ST GILES' LECTURES.

SIXTH SERIES—THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

LECTURE V.

SECESSIONS FROM THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND;
RISE AND PROGRESS OF VOLUNTARYISM.

By the Rev. JAMES MITCHELL, D.D., Minister of the Parish of
South Leith.

NOT only is the word 'Voluntaryism' a new word, having been coined by a minister still living in Edinburgh, but the doctrine of Voluntaryism among Presbyterians is in Scotland of not much more ancient date; and it is the object of this lecture to show that so far from its being a principle held by the first fathers of the different Secession Churches, it was a principle which they repudiated, and which therefore ought not to be held by any who claim to be their legitimate descendants. It must be borne in mind that although 'Voluntaryism' and 'voluntary liberality' are generally spoken of as synonymous terms, they are essentially distinct. 'Voluntaryism' is the denial of the lawful-

ness of all union or connection between Church and State, while 'voluntary liberality' is the giving for religious objects, through the operation of moral influences and religious motives alone. Voluntary liberality has always been advocated by the Church of Scotland as an important Christian duty; but Voluntaryism she has throughout her whole history abjured. Voluntaryism in Scotland took its rise in the different Secession Churches long after they had seceded from the Church of Scotland, and at periods in their respective histories when the principles originally held began to affect their own position; while it made progress in each of these bodies, just in proportion as the prospect of a reunion with the Established Church, or of their ever becoming the Established Church themselves, became gradually fainter. I do not say that any of their ministers, or any of their members, were consciously influenced by these considerations; but, as 'the best of men are but men at the best,' the coincidence suggests that circumstances may have had an unconscious influence on the formation and development of their opinions. Opinions which have to some extent been shaped by expediency, are not immediately to be designated by the name of 'principles.' Neither are men entitled in the same breath to serve themselves heirs to the historic Church of Scotland and the fathers of the Secession, and to proclaim that they are convinced of the sinfulness of the union between Church and State. True conviction of sin, according to the Scriptures, has two distinguishing features—the one is, that the sinner is first convinced of his sin, and then he for-

sakes it; and the other is, that he is convinced of his own sin, and not merely of the sins of others. Conviction of the sinfulness of the union between Church and State differs from true conviction of sin in both these particulars; for as regards those bodies who have seceded from the Church of Scotland, they first forsook their sin, and then after a considerable lapse of time became convinced of its sinfulness (for none of them, as we shall see, left the Church in consequence of their conviction of the sinfulness of the union between Church and State); and what they became convinced of, and profess to feel so deeply, is not their own sin, but the sin of the members of the Church of Scotland. I hope to be able to prove, from authoritative documents, that those who led the different Secessions from the Church of Scotland, did so, not because they objected to the principle of an Established Church, but because they objected to some things in the practice of that church which they believed to be wrong, and which they hoped to be able to remove by their protest and separation, that so they might return to it again. If patronage were not in every case the sole *cause*, yet it was in every case the *occasion* of the secessions.

Cause
See

There have been Three secessions from the Church of Scotland, which I shall notice, both separately and together.

The First Secession had Ebenezer Erskine as its leader. When he, as moderator of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, preached, in 1732, the sermon which brought him into collision with the church courts, he condemned not the union of Church and State, but the system of patronage as worked by the

majority of the Assembly, whom he denounced for their violation of the ordinary rules of Assembly procedure in order to gain their ends, for their refusal to allow dissents from their decisions to be recorded, and for their general defection from sound doctrine and right government in the Church. Fault having been found with several expressions which he had employed, he was asked by successive committees of the synod to acknowledge that he was wrong in uttering them, and to promise that in future he would express himself more guardedly. He refused to do so, and appealed to the Assembly, who appointed a committee to deal with him; but they made no progress, and asked the Assembly to determine the cause themselves. The Assembly found that the expressions used in his synod sermon were offensive, and tended to disturb the peace of the Church, and ordered him to be rebuked and admonished; but he immediately gave in a protest declaring that he adhered to the testimony which he had already borne against the Act of Assembly in his synod sermon. In this protest he was joined by three ministerial brethren. Their case was remitted to the meeting of the Commission in August, to suspend them from the exercise of their ministry if they did not withdraw their protest; while the Commission in November was authorised to proceed to a higher censure if they had not obeyed the sentence of suspension. In August they refused to withdraw their protest, and were suspended; and in November they declared that they had exercised all the parts of their ministerial office, as if they had been under no such censure. Instead of being

deposed from the ministry immediately, a committee was appointed to confer with them, who, after two lengthened interviews, reported that all their efforts were fruitless. On this the Commission loosed their relations to their respective parishes, and declared them no longer ministers of the Church. At the same time, however, the Commission agreed that, provided this sentence was obeyed, and application made for restoration to the Commission in March, they would report in their favour to the next General Assembly. So far from this having any effect, when this sentence was intimated to them, they protested that notwithstanding this sentence, their pastoral relation should be held firm and valid; that they adhered to the principles of the true covenanted Church of Scotland; and that, as the prevailing party of the Established Church, who had now cast them out from ministerial communion with them, were carrying on a course of defection from the reformed and covenanted principles, they could have no ministerial communion with them till they saw their sins and mistakes, and amended them; and they concluded their protest with these words: 'We hereby appeal unto *the first, free, faithful, and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.*'

Though the Church still left the door open for their return, the Secession was, so far as Erskine and his followers were concerned, virtually completed within three weeks after the meeting of the Commission, for on 3d December 1733 the four brethren met at Gairney Bridge, and there formed themselves into 'The Associate Presbytery.' Shortly after

this, they published their First Testimony, as it was afterwards called, being a testimony to the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the Church of Scotland. Throughout, its authors are careful to let it be known that their secession is only from 'the prevailing party' in the Church of Scotland (the expression, 'the prevailing party,' occurring upwards of thirty times), who, they allege, are carrying on with a high hand a course of defection from our Reformation and covenanted principles.' 'Our secession is not from the Church of Scotland; we own her doctrine contained in her Confession of Faith; we adhere to her covenanted Presbyterian Church government, discipline, and worship; neither is our secession from those who are cleaving to our covenanted principles, and who are affected with the grievances we complain of, and are in their several spheres wrestling against the same; but it is from a party who have got the management into their hands, and who have got the majority on their side in the judicatories, particularly in our Assemblies and Commissions, and who are carrying on a course of defection from our reformed and covenanted principles, and are suppressing ministerial freedom and faithfulness in testifying against their present backslidings, by inflicting censures upon her ministers for witnessing by protestation and otherwise against the same' (pp. 45, 46). Had *they* been 'the prevailing party,' they would never have proposed to secede; and indeed, theirs could scarcely be called *secession*, for they still retained possession of their manses, glebes, churches, and stipends, and got all the glory of martyrdom with-

out any of its penalties. There were many in the Church as loyal to Evangelical principles as they, and as anxious to vindicate popular rights ; and the effect of their presence was seen in the removal of many of the evils which they, as well as Erskine, had complained of. Had Erskine and his followers, instead of forming their Associate Presbytery, remained, as Willison and others did, actively co-operating against the abuses and corruptions in the Church, the great probability is, that the labours of the Evangelical party would have been crowned with success—that patronage would speedily have been got rid of, and future secessions from the Church of Scotland have been prevented. But by this time they had already a large following, they were the leaders of a popular movement ; and although the Church was willing to receive them again, having authorised the synod to remove the sentence which had been passed upon them, these overtures on the part of the Church were met only by the publication in 1736 of what they called a ‘Judicial Testimony,’ in which they laid at her door all the real and imaginary sins and shortcomings of the country. It is worthy of notice, however, that in their lengthy catalogue of national sins, the union of Church and State finds as yet no place. If the Church was ill advised in taking any notice of Erskine’s synod sermon, she certainly showed great forbearance afterwards towards those who had taken up so sullen and stubborn an attitude towards her judicatories ; but forbearance has its limits, and the publication of this ‘Judicial Testimony’ brought matters to a crisis, so

that in 1738, the Assembly summoned the seceding ministers to her bar. They appeared, but on this occasion as 'the Associate Presbytery;' and having declined the jurisdiction of an 'unfaithful church,' they departed; but not even then did they separate themselves from the stipends or manses or churches of the Establishment—this separation did not come voluntarily, it was effected of necessity; for after they had retained these for two years longer, the Assembly of 1740 solemnly deposed them from the sacred office of the ministry; and if they became *voluntaries* in any sense, they became so *involuntarily*.

In 1742, when the country was in a very unsettled state, and when many, under shelter of the Solemn League and Covenant, maintained that they were not bound to obey any one as king of these realms who had not the Scripture qualifications required of kings, and who by his coronation oath was not bound to maintain and defend the true religion, and extirpate popery, prelacy, and all false religions—the Associate Presbytery, while they made preparations for renewing the Solemn League and Covenant, proposed that a clause should be inserted condemning 'the dangerous extreme into which many had run of impugning the present civil authority over these nations, and subjection thereunto in all lawful demands, on account of the want of those qualifications which magistrates ought to have by the word of God and our covenants; even although they allow us in the free exercise of our religion, and are not manifestly unhinging the liberties of

the kingdom,' &c. From this clause Mr Nairn of Kirkcaldy dissented for several reasons, and also on the ground that 'the civil part of the covenant was altogether omitted, from a consciousness that the acknowledgment of the present civil government was inconsistent with the ancient covenants.' In the following year he published an account of his secession from the Associate Presbytery, with the grounds and reasons for his doing so. In 1744 the Associate Presbytery published their answers to his reasons of dissent, together with a declaration and defence of their principles anent the present civil government. In this declaration occur the following words: 'The public ground of outward and common order in all *reasonable* society, unto the glory of God, is the *great* and only *end* which these invested with the magistracy can propose, in a *sole* respect unto that office.' This passage has frequently been quoted in recent years as a proof that the Associate Presbytery at that time intended to condemn the connection between Church and State. But it must be obvious to any one who reads the document through, that they were not thinking of church establishments at all. The whole tenor of the document is against any such theory—they are speaking merely of obedience to civil magistrates as such—and they condemn the civil magistrate for laxity and indifference in spiritual matters. At page 53 they say: 'Moreover, the law of God hath been despised, and a toleration upon the matter given to diabolical acts and practices, by the act repealing the penal statutes against witches.'

In 1745, the Associate Presbytery was constituted into the 'Associate Synod,' but scarcely had it been formed, when a controversy arose regarding a clause in the burgess oath, which, two years later, rent it in twain. The clause was in the following terms, and was contained in the oath imposed upon burgesses in the towns of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Perth: 'Here I protest, before God and your lordships, that I profess and allow with my heart the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorised by the law thereof; I shall abide therein, and defend the same to my life's end, renouncing the human religion called papacy.' Two overtures had brought the matter before the Associate Synod in 1745. The question, 'What is meant by the true religion presently professed within this realm?' gave rise to a long and keen discussion. On one side it was maintained that these words meant 'the true religion *as* presently professed and authorised, &c.,' and that, therefore, to take that oath involved a solemn approbation of those corruptions which prevailed in the Established Church, and against which the Secession had publicly testified. On the other side, it was maintained, that this clause of the oath bound the individual who swore it, to approve of *the true religion itself* as that which was settled and professed in this realm, but did not bind him to approve of the *manner* in which it might be settled and professed; and that, therefore, it did not require of him any approbation of the prevailing corruptions in either Church or State. The great difficulty experienced was to avoid condemning themselves; for if they

expressed their satisfaction with the true religion presently professed within this realm, they might imply that there was no warrant for professing it, except in the communion of the Established Church. It would be both painful and wearisome to relate the almost innumerable discussions which took place on this subject. Suffice it to say, that the Associate Synod split into two parts, each assuming the same title of the Associate Synod—those who condemned the taking of the oath as sinful being designated *Antiburghers*; and those who opposed the Synod's giving any decision on the question, and who contended that it should be declared to be no term of communion, being called *Burghers*; and these names became distinctive of the two synods. The Antiburgher Synod afterwards libelled Ebenezer Erskine, Ralph Erskine, James Fisher, and other ministers; found all the articles of the libel proven, suspended them from the exercise of their ministry, deposed them, and finally passed upon them the sentence of the greater excommunication.

The Second Secession from the Church of Scotland took place in 1752, and was occasioned by the deposition of the Rev. Thomas Gillespie, minister of Carnock, who had declined to assent to the settlement of an unacceptable presentee at Inverkeithing. Gillespie was loyal to the Church, and was unjustly compelled to become the founder of another sect, which, however, indicated clearly its attitude towards the Church of Scotland by taking to itself the name of the *Relief* Church. His treatment was tyrannical and unfair. He had merely declined to be present at the meeting of presbytery on the day appointed

for the presentee's settlement, and as there was no quorum, the business could not be proceeded with. The presbytery were summoned to the bar of the Assembly, when six of their number gave in a representation, in which they modestly but firmly stated their defence. They reminded the house that 'ever since the Act restoring patronages, in the end of Queen Anne's reign, there has been a vehement opposition to all settlements by presentations, where there was but small concurrence; and that the Assembly, so recently as 1736, had passed an act against the intrusion of ministers, which called upon all presbyteries, as they regarded the glory of God and the edification of the body of Christ, to see that no minister be intruded. They declared their solemn conviction that by having an active hand in carrying that settlement into execution, they should, as matters then stood, have been the unhappy instrument of scattering the flock of Christ; and finally, they protested that if, on this account, they should be judged guilty of such criminal disobedience as to deserve censures, they would suffer solely for adhering to what they apprehended to be the will of their great Lord and Master.' Unmoved by this remonstrance, the Assembly resolved to make an example. They resolved to select a victim by vote, and the lot of deposition fell on Gillespie. From that single seed sprung the second secession—since known by the name of the Relief Synod. Gillespie (contrary to the conduct of the first seceders) immediately and voluntarily vacated church and manse; and after his deposition, he

continued for some months to preach in the fields, and in the following winter and spring in a meeting-house in Dunfermline, waiting patiently the result of the Assembly of 1753, when two petitions for the reopening of his case were presented and considered—one from the parish of Carnock, the other from the Presbytery of Dunfermline. The proposal to restore him was lost by a majority of three. It was only after this decision that Mr Gillespie constituted a session and congregation; while it was not until 1769 that the *Presbytery of Relief* was formed at Colinsburgh in Fife, on the occasion of the admission of a minister to the charge of a congregation which had been formed there, as the result of an unacceptable settlement which had driven the people from the parish church. When an overture for taking off from Mr Gillespie the sentence of deposition, came before the Assembly in 1770, after the separate Relief Presbytery was constituted, the proposal to *Repone* was negatived by a large majority. Nevertheless, Mr Gillespie gave the strongest proof of his attachment to the Establishment, for on his deathbed he advised his congregation to apply for restoration to the communion of the Church of Scotland, by having their meeting-house declared a chapel of ease in connection with the Established Church. This they did, immediately on Gillespie's death; but a strong opposition being made to their admission, by the ministers of the Abbey Church in Dunfermline, a number of years elapsed before they could accomplish their purpose, and they were not received as members of the Church of Scotland till 1779.))

Owing to this vexatious delay, and their admission being postponed from Assembly to Assembly, a part of the congregation, in the meantime, built another meeting-house and called a minister; but after some time he too applied to the Church of Scotland to be taken into communion on the chapel-of-ease system, and was received.

Thrust out though they were from the Established Church, which had shut the door of communion against them, their object from the first was to make their meeting-houses merely chapels of ease to parish churches, in the hope that in this way they might be received and acknowledged by the Church, even in their judicial capacities. In proof of this we find, that when Mr Alexander Simson, before being settled by the Relief Presbytery at Bellshill, applied to the Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, by which he had been licensed, for an extract, the presbytery, so far from granting his request, drew up a libel against him; in answer to which he stated that 'neither he nor the Presbytery of Relief taught any separating principles, and that he was affording a temporary relief to a part of the parish of Bothwell, who were desirous to remain upon the Establishment, which he had done nothing to prevent.' The General Assembly, on 5th June 1764, declared him incapable of receiving a call, as a licentiate of this Church, to any of the parishes within the same. The Relief, true to its name, continued to afford relief to large numbers of persons who suffered under the evils of patronage—whole parishes, over which an unacceptable presentee had been settled, in some cases going over to them.

Nevertheless, the Church pursued its suicidal policy. It is true that in many cases admirable ministers were objected to, merely because they had been *presented*, and not from any unsuitability for the charge; but it is just as true that in many cases patronage was exercised with a high hand, and congregations could not do otherwise than seek the relief which they found elsewhere. The Relief Presbytery increased and multiplied—became a Synod, and carried on useful work. For many years the students for its ministry attended the theological classes in the university, and were there trained along with the students for the ministry of the Church of Scotland; and it was not until the Church of Scotland, in 1834, proposed her scheme for church extension with additional endowments from the State, that the Relief Synod, almost in self-defence, indicated, in the following parenthetical sentence, their hostile attitude towards the Church of Scotland: ‘They disapprove indeed of her connection with the State, and trace up to this source the greater part of her shortcomings and corruptions.’

We must now, however, return to the history of the first secession. In 1752 a question was brought before the Antiburgher Synod for judgment, by a reference from the ‘Seceders in Ireland, in which they were joined by their brethren in England, as to ‘whether they were warranted in making the usual payments for the support of the Established Church by law established in these islands.’ On this subject they passed an act declaring ‘that though the afore-mentioned payments are

applied for the support of manifold corruptions and superstitions in these Episcopal churches, which we are essaying to testify against, and which all ranks of people in these lands ought to be humbled for before the Lord, as being deep causes of his wrath against, and controversy with them; yet the Synod do not find a relevant ground for scruple of conscience about submitting to civil authority in the foresaid payments; as if this would imply any homologation of the foresaid corruptions and superstitions, or of what application is made of these payments unto the support thereof, while the payers are openly engaged in a public testimony against the same, and are not suppressed in the maintenance of that testimony, but are protected in the exercise of their civil and religious liberties; and the said payments are made only in compliance with the common order of society.'

Contrast the views expressed in this act of the Antiburghers with the advice which has been so persistently given by those who claim to be their descendants, and say whether, in this respect, they are holding fast by the principles of their forefathers. Over and over again, in elaborate treatises, and by impassioned platform addresses, have the members of the seceding congregations in Scotland been appealed to by the memory of the great founders of the Secession, to refuse to yield support to ecclesiastical institutions of which they conscientiously disapprove.

In 1789, the French Revolution broke out, *freedom* became the general watchword on the part of the people—political atheism was openly

avowed, and views and sentiments subversive of existing institutions began to spread among all classes. The effect of these sentiments was seen in two overtures laid on the table of the General Associate Synod in 1791, relating to the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion. In 1793 a committee was appointed to prepare the draft of an act on the subject, and after innumerable meetings of committee, and reports to successive meetings of the Synod, it was not until May 1804, that the Synod was in a position to pass an act founded on the committee's draft. This they did in such terms as to go much farther in the direction of Voluntaryism than ever they had gone before; while the second question which had up to this time been put to all probationers before receiving license, and to all ministers and elders before being ordained—namely, 'Do you sincerely own and believe the *whole doctrine* contained in the Confession of Faith, compiled by the Assembly of Divines that met at Westminster, with commissioners from the Church of Scotland?'—was altered to 'agreeably to the declaration in the Narrative and Testimony enacted by the General Associate Synod in 1804; that is, only in so far as it agrees with that Narrative and Testimony.'

It is to be observed, however, that not even as yet did they say that the connection of Church and State was either unscriptural or sinful; they merely defined the respective provinces of Church and State in such a manner as left it to be inferred that an Established Church must allow of the interference of the civil magistrate in matters

exclusively spiritual, which has never been admitted by the Church. They testified 'against all such conjunction of Church and State as subjects the State to the Church in civil matters, and the Church to the State in those that are religious.' Nevertheless, the practical significance of the omission from the old formula, and the interpretation given of the Confession of Faith by the new Testimony, were reckoned so suggestive, that four ministers of the Synod, among whom was the celebrated Dr M'Crie, the well-known biographer of Knox and Melville, protested against the deed of the Synod as leading to engagements different from, if not contrary to, those they had already come under; while they protested further that they should not be considered as bound to take part in the execution of the deed, or to conform to the injunctions and directions which it contained. The explanations given being unsatisfactory, Dr M'Crie and the others, in August 1806, constituted themselves into a presbytery, under the designation of the 'Constitutional Associate Presbytery.' They were accordingly deposed from the office of the ministry by the General Associate Synod. A similar occurrence took place in the Burgher section of the breach, and those who were thrown off from their communion, constituted themselves into the 'Original Burgher Presbytery.' These two subdivisions are better known popularly, by the names of the 'Old Light Antiburghers,' and the 'Old Light Burghers.'

In 1820, both the Antiburghers and the Burghers having so far altered their standards that the burgess oath (the original cause of their separation)

could find no place, after seventy years' separation, made common cause together, and were formally reunited on the 8th of May, under the name of the 'United Associate Synod of the Secession Church.'

The second article of the basis of union is in these words: 'We retain the Westminster Confession of Faith, with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as the confession of our faith, expressive of the sense in which we understand the Holy Scriptures; it being always understood, however, that we do not affirm or require an approbation of anything in those books, or in any other, which teaches, or may be thought to teach, compulsory or persecuting and intolerant principles of religion.' This qualification was one which was singularly in accordance with the creed which the then position of the Seceders required; for had they professed to believe that compulsion or persecution for religious opinions was within the province of the civil magistrate, they would have been, if not inviting persecution, at least rendering themselves unable to protest against it, if it came. It has been said by themselves that they were led forward in the good providence of God, to clearer views of the real relation between Church and State, by one step at a time; but it is somewhat remarkable that the clearer views were vouchsafed at the very time when the step which they were about to take, would have been condemned by all their previous teaching, had new light not been given.

But a new doctrine was very soon to be advocated, in order to meet the exigencies of the

position of the Seceders. The Church of Scotland had, up to this time, contented herself with planting chapels of ease in several places, where the need of them was most severely felt; but, in consequence of the want of accommodation in large towns, manufacturing villages, and populous parishes, it was felt that it was absolutely necessary to carry on, upon a much larger scale, the work of church extension, and in 1828 the Church Extension Committee was appointed 'to collect information, and without delay to take the best means for bringing the matter before the notice of His Majesty's Government.' No sooner was this resolution arrived at on the part of the Church, than the views of the Seceders underwent a change. If a government grant were given for the purpose of overtaking the spiritual destitution of the country, the number of places of worship which might be added to the Church of Scotland, would seriously interfere with the extension and even the support of the Secession churches; and accordingly the first real note of change of view, and the first ray of clearer light on the connection of Church and State, came in 1829, when the Rev. Mr Marshall of Kirkintilloch preached and published a sermon, in which he maintained that religious establishments were unscriptural, unjust, impolitic, secularising in their tendency, inefficient, and unnecessary. The public mind was then in a very excited condition; the Catholic Emancipation Act had just been passed, and Mr Marshall, in the preface to his sermon, stated it as probable that the Roman Catholics, having obtained emancipation, might ere long become the

Established Church in Ireland, and that he did not see how, on the principles of those who vindicate establishments, such a claim could well be refused. Pamphlet succeeded pamphlet, and the controversy soon became general, and in 1832, immediately on the passing of the Reform Bill, a society was formed in Edinburgh, called 'The Voluntary Church Association,' of which the following were the fundamental principles: 'That a compulsory support of religious institutions is inconsistent with the nature of religion, the spirit of the gospel, the express appointments of Jesus Christ, and the civil rights of man; that in every case where the individual disapproves of the system supported, or of the principle of its support, it is an unwarrantable attack on the rights of property, and a direct invasion of the rights of conscience.' It was intended to include all those who were friendly to the support of the gospel by voluntary contributions; and, indeed, included Independents and others among its ranks. Nevertheless, it was chiefly composed of ministers and members of the Secession churches, one of whom moved the resolution quoted above, and many of whom were the originators of similar voluntary church associations which were organised throughout the country. The cool assumption by the association that the support of the Established Church was compulsory, and that voluntary contributions for the support of the gospel were unknown there, enlisted a large number of followers, who, newly enfranchised under the Reform Bill, and panting after freedom, were told that ecclesiastical establishments were incon-

sistent with the civil rights of man. All were welcomed, whatever their religious creed, or whether they had any creed or not; assistance was sought from any quarter, and welcomed heartily, though it were proffered by those who desired the destruction of all religion, if only they would unite for the destruction of the establishment. The very change of name which took place is significant. Up to this time most of them had gloried in the name of 'Seceder,' and repudiated with indignation the word 'Dissenter,' because the seceder is one who adheres to the professed principles of the Church of Scotland, and who secedes, or withdraws from her communion because of the persistent deviations which her courts have made from her own standards, and who hopes that the evils which produced the secession will be removed, and the great breach healed. A dissenter, on the other hand, is one who condemns her whole form of government and national establishment, and will not therefore join in her communion, however unexceptionable in doctrine and discipline. From this time forward, however, the word 'dissenter' was a title which they often applied to themselves, and gloried in; because from the moment they became a voluntary church, they were no longer seceders but dissenters. Having associated themselves with those in every land who had long been accustomed to denounce all connection between the civil magistrate and religion, and having invited them as auxiliaries to aid in the destruction of the Church of Scotland as a national establishment, they naturally were tainted by their opinions, and from the time that they formed

an alliance with them, the language of their leaders with reference to all national establishments became more and more distinctly condemnatory, both of the principle and the practice. This language became more pronounced after they associated themselves in their crusade against Church establishments, with the English Nonconformists, who had much earlier fallen away from the principles of their founders. The most eminent of the early Nonconformists, Dr John Owen, Cromwell's brother-in-law, who was one of the leading men in the Long Parliament, where a motion on disestablishment was brought forward, said, 'If it comes to this, and you say that you have nothing to do with religion as the rulers of the nation, God will very soon have nothing to do with you as rulers of the nation;' while at a much more recent period we find the prince of commentators—one of the greatest and ablest and best of all Nonconformists, and almost of all Englishmen of his time—I mean Matthew Henry, saying in his peerless commentary: 'It is the duty of rulers to take care of religion, and to see that the duties of it be regularly and carefully performed by those under their charge. Let us give God praise for the national establishment of our religion with that of our peace and civil liberty,' and he adds, 'Christianity is twisted in with the very constitution of our government.'

Though the appeal which Dr Chalmers and others made to the Government, was unsuccessful; yet, within less than seven years, over £300,000 was contributed for the church extension scheme, and an

addition of 220 churches made to the places of worship in connection with the Church of Scotland. This involved the drying up of one of the sources of the support of dissent in Scotland, for unquestionably the want of accommodation in the parish churches was the cause of many congregations being formed in connection with the Secession; and the war was continued by the Seceders, but now on the ground that all state endowments of religion were unscriptural. This was universally recognised as a distinctly new position for the Seceders in Scotland to occupy, and the remarkable fact is that the most valiant assailants of Voluntaryism, and the most resolute and skilful defenders of the principle of national establishments of religion, were those ministers of the Church of Scotland who, a few years afterwards, became the founders and leaders of the Free Church of Scotland. In proof of this, I need mention only the names of Dr Chalmers, Dr Guthrie, Dr Candlish, Dr Begg, Dr C. J. Brown, Principal Cunningham, and Dr Buchanan. Dr Buchanan (afterwards Professor in the Free Church College, Edinburgh) closes a prefatory discourse in a volume of lectures on Civil Establishments of Religion, with the following warning: 'What might be the aggregate or ultimate results of such a change as would throw all the churches on the voluntary principle, we know not; but looking merely to human means and probabilities, we should say that one of its effects would probably be the speedy ascendancy of popery. Even without any legal sanction (which, however, *it* does not repudiate), it is the most likely to

acquire the pre-eminence on the voluntary plan. It is an old, firmly-rooted, and wealthy church; its resources are inexhaustible, and the greater in proportion as its superstitions are gross. Hitherto the Established Church has been the great bulwark of Protestantism, against which popery has for ages tried its strength in vain, and behind which the various smaller bodies of Protestants have rested in peace, as it were in so many little creeks and bays. That bulwark has become somewhat dilapidated, or has not been duly extended, and the surge is already making head over it; but, instead of reinforcing and strengthening it, the dissenters are eagerly seeking to remove or destroy that mighty breakwater altogether.' Principal Cunningham, in a lecture on the Lawfulness of Union between Church and State, speaking of what he calls 'the monstrous Voluntary principle,' which denies the lawfulness of all union or connection between Church and State, and the duty and right of civil rulers to do anything about religion—'a principle,' he adds, 'to which such fearful practical consequences attach, as must excite the indignation of every right-thinking man'—goes on to say, 'If this principle should be generally adopted, should gain the ascendancy in our national councils, and be followed out to its consequences, then it would, of course, be established by law that men, on becoming invested with civil authority, must leave their religious views behind them, renounce all right in that character and capacity, to aim at the promotion of the glory of God, and the honour of Christ; and the effect of this would be to exclude religious men from civil

authority (for they would not accept it upon such terms), and to leave it wholly in the hands of atheists and infidels.'

5 471 *The Third Secession*—that of the Free Church—is an event of such comparatively recent date, that it is unnecessary to enter farther into its causes than to say that it originated in the system of patronage, which still existed in the Church, under various modifications, but which was frequently very arbitrarily exercised. At last, in 1834, the Evangelical party, so called, were in a majority in the General Assembly, and passed a Chapel Act, which declared the ministers of *quoad sacra* chapels to be constituent members of presbyteries and synods, and eligible to sit in the General Assembly; and to enjoy every privilege as fully and freely, and with equal powers with parish ministers of the Church. It is worthy of notice that, in this same Assembly of 1834 (the first year that the party which afterwards formed the Free Church had the ascendancy), the question of Voluntaryism was disposed of in a very summary manner. Mr Hugh Craig, an elder of the church, had officiated at a meeting in Kilmarnock, at which a petition was adopted, praying for the separation of Church and State. The Assembly instructed the presbytery to call Mr Craig before them, and if they found that he persisted in the sentiments which he had expressed, to depose him *instanter* from the office of a ruling elder of this church. The presbytery accordingly deposed him; the synod summarily approved the judgment of the presbytery, while the Assembly of the following year dismissed

his appeal—the maintenance of the establishment principle being regarded as obligatory on all the office-bearers of the church. In 1835, the Evangelical party being further recruited, in many presbyteries, by the admission of these chapel ministers, a very large majority of Evangelicals were returned as members of Assembly, which in that year passed the Veto Act, to prevent the intrusion of unacceptable presentees. By it the General Assembly declared, enacted, and ordained, ‘that if at the moderating of a call to a vacant pastoral charge, the major part of the male heads of families, members of the vacant congregation, and in full communion with the church, shall disapprove of the person in whose favour the call is proposed to be moderated in—such disapproval shall be deemed sufficient ground for the presbytery rejecting such person, and he shall be rejected accordingly.’ The Moderate, or Constitutional party in the church regarded the passing of both these acts as being beyond the power of the Church without the concurrence of the State, as both were a violation of the original agreement entered into voluntarily with the State, and as one party to an agreement ought not to be allowed to alter its terms without consulting the other. Both Acts involved civil rights, and those who considered those rights encroached upon, summoned the Church before the civil courts to have it settled whether she had exceeded her powers or not; and in both cases they decided that the Church was in the wrong. The questions at issue were not questions of *spiritual*, but of *ecclesiastical* independence. They were not questions between the law of God and the

law of man, but between church law and statute law. By passing the Veto Act, the Church altered her own constitution: that constitution *allowed* her to reject a presentee if she considered it proper; but her own Veto Act *excluded* her judgment, and compelled presbyteries to reject a presentee, if objected to by the majority of the male heads of families in full communion with the church, even though they gave no reason for their rejection of him. The first case in which the legality of the Veto Act was tried was that of Auchterarder. That parish became vacant in 1834, and the Earl of Kinnoull, as patron, presented the Rev. Robert Young, a licentiate of the Church. Out of 330 heads of families on the communion roll, 289 objected to the presentee. Had the presbytery acted in terms of the Church's agreement with the State, by asking these objectors to state the grounds of their objections, and had then taken Mr Young on trial, to see how far these objections could be sustained, there would have been no collision between the Church and the State, even although they had ultimately rejected him; but acting under their own Veto Act, they asked for no reasons for the congregation's disapproval, but refused, in consequence, to take the presentee on trial, and rejected him as unsuitable. The patron and the presentee immediately appealed to the Court of Session to have it tried whether or not the Church had acted legally in what she had done. The Church contended that it was incompetent on the part of the Court of Session to review her decisions, but this objection was repelled; and after a long

trial before the whole thirteen judges, it was decided by eight to five 'that the presbytery of Auchterarder did refuse, and continued to refuse, to take trial of the qualifications of the said Robert Young, and have rejected him as presentee to the said church and parish, on the sole ground (as they admit in the record) that a majority of the male heads of families, communicants in the said parish, have dissented, without any reason assigned, from his admission as minister: Find that the said presbytery, in so doing, have acted to the hurt and prejudice of the said pursuers, illegally, and in violation of their duty, and contrary to the provisions of certain statutes libelled on.' The presbytery appealed to the House of Lords, which, after a full argument, confirmed the decision of the Court of Session on 2d May 1839. It is needless to refer to other cases of the same kind, in some of which the Court of Session acted beyond their powers—but all these would have been avoided had the illegal Veto Act been rescinded. This, however, the Evangelical party refused to do, although they declared that if they had believed that it infringed on the rights of patrons, they would not have passed it. The Moderate party, as they were termed, were as earnest as the other in asserting the spiritual independence of the Church, and in claiming the powers which it had received from its great Head, but they had declared from the first that the Veto Act was illegal; and they were not an insignificant minority. The decisions of the civil courts did not, from their point of view, interfere in the least with their spiritual independence—in fact,

they declared, in that same Assembly, that 'were any power to attempt to wrest their sacred privileges from them, they would march out together to defend them, displaying the banner of their great King, and determined, could they not gain the victory, to perish in the warfare.'

From 1840 to 1843, negotiations were carried on between the Church and the Government, but all fell through, in consequence, to a large extent, of the unreasonable demands made by the Evangelical party. When the General Assembly met on the 18th of May 1843, in St Andrew's Church, Dr Welsh, the retiring moderator, took the chair, and, without nominating his successor, announced that he and others, who had been returned as members, meant to abandon the Establishment. In explanation of the grounds for this step, he read a full and clear protest, in which the following words occur: 'Firmly asserting the right and duty of the civil magistrate to maintain and support an establishment of religion in accordance with God's word, and reserving to ourselves and to our successors to strive, by all lawful means, as opportunity shall in God's good providence be afforded, to secure the performance of this duty agreeably to the Scriptures, and implement of the statutes of the kingdom of Scotland, and the obligations of the Treaty of Union as understood by us and our ancestors.' The same document also affirms that the Claim, Declaration, and Protest of the General Assembly which convened at Edinburgh in May 1842, shall be held as setting forth the true constitution of the said Church.' Now, what

does this Claim, Declaration, and Protest say on this subject? The conclusion of it is as follows, and nothing can be less ambiguous: 'They especially invite all the office-bearers and members of this Church, who are willing to suffer for their allegiance to their adorable King and Head, to stand by the Church and by each other, in defence of the doctrine aforesaid, and of the liberties and privileges, whether of office-bearers or people, which rest upon it; and to unite in supplication to Almighty God, that He would be pleased to turn the hearts of the rulers of this kingdom, to keep unbroken the faith pledged to this Church in former days by statutes and solemn treaty, and the obligations come under to God himself, to preserve and maintain the government and discipline of this Church in accordance with the word; or otherwise, that He would give strength to this Church—office-bearers and people—to endure resignedly the loss of the temporal benefits of an establishment, and the personal sufferings and sacrifices to which they may be called; and would also inspire them with zeal and energy to promote the advancement of his Son's kingdom, in whatever condition it may be his will to place them; and that, in his own good time, He would restore to them these benefits, the fruits of the struggles and sufferings of their fathers in times past in the same cause, and thereafter give them grace to employ them more effectually than hitherto they have done for the manifestation of His glory.'

When those who had signed the protest withdrew, they went to the large hall in the Canonmills, and formed 'the Free Church of Scotland.' Dr Welsh

proposed as his successor the Rev. Dr Chalmers, who, in his address from the moderator's chair, said : ' The voluntaries mistake us, if they conceive us to be voluntaries. We hold by the duty of Government to give of their resources and their means for the maintenance of a Gospel ministry in the land ; and we pray that their eyes may be opened, and that they may learn how to acquit themselves as the protectors of the Church, and not as its corrupters or its tyrants.' In a word, we hold that every part and every function of a commonwealth should be leavened with Christianity, and that every functionary, from the highest to the lowest, should, in their respective spheres, do all that in them lies to countenance and uphold it. That is to say, ' though we quit the Establishment, we go out on the Establishment principle ; we quit a vitiated Establishment, but would rejoice to return to a pure one. To express it otherwise, we are the advocates for a national recognition and a national support of religion ; *and we are not Voluntaries.*'

For some time after the Disruption the leaders of the Free Church were too much occupied with the organisation of the new church to have time for any special utterances on the subject of church establishments ; but whenever opportunity presented itself, they gave no uncertain sound. In the *Catechism of the Principles and Constitution of the Free Church of Scotland*, prepared by the Rev. Andrew Gray of Perth, and published in 1844 ' by authority of the Publication Committee of the General Assembly,' it is said ' that rulers are bound to guard the liberties of the Church, to have respect to the

interests thereof in the administration of their affairs, and to employ their power and resources in such a way as shall best contribute to its successful progress within their territory and throughout the world.' Of this catechism Principal Cunningham, in 1847, says, it is 'now well known in this land, in which I am sure every one will admit that the great leading principles of our testimony are most clearly, ably, and effectively set forth.'

In 1847, when some hints had been thrown out as to the propriety of changing the general policy of the Free Church in the direction of Voluntaryism, Dr Chalmers, in the very year of his death, said: 'We rejoice in the testimony of the Free Church for the principle of a national establishment, and most sincerely do we hope that she will never fall away from it. Sorely aggrieved as she has been by our rulers, she will neither underrate the importance of their friendship, nor yet the solemn obligation which lies upon them to care for the religion of the people, and to provide, within their sphere, for this best and highest interest of the commonwealth.' Hugh Miller, writing about the same time in condemnation of the same proposal, said: 'Whether right or wrong in my conclusions, I am at least thoroughly convinced that it would have the effect, if acted upon, of placing the great Protestant front of the empire in a fatally false position, and would besides be peculiarly injurious to the Free Church. We have, I think, direct evidence that though the war against popery is, in its effects on those who prosecute it, an eminently safe war, the war against establishments is not. Never, at least, was the Church more

spiritual than when she was warring against popery ; *never did any church, in any controversy, become more secular than the voluntaries of Scotland when warring against establishments.* The war against popery would be strictly constitutional ; the war against establishments would not ; it would of necessity endanger, with the assailed institutions, not a few precious remnants of the Revolution Settlement, in which no class have a larger stake than we. And it is besides a grave question whether the Free Church would not lose immensely more, by forfeiting the esteem of all solid men hostile to a position so revolutionary, than she could possibly gain through any consequent accession to the number of her allies from the ranks of the reckless and the dissatisfied. Such a war would justly lay our church open, if waged ere the present generation has passed away, to a charge of gross and suspicious inconsistency.'

In 1851, the General Assembly of the Free Church unanimously agreed to sanction the publication of a volume containing their 'subordinate standards and the authoritative documents.' An act and declaration of an historical nature was adopted, and not only printed in the Acts of Assembly, but given as a preface to this volume of Free Church standards. This act contains amongst other things a declaration, 'that this church has always strenuously advocated the doctrine taught in Holy Scripture, that nations and their rulers are bound to own the truth of God and to advance the kingdom of his Son. And, accordingly, with unfeigned

thankfulness did she acknowledge the good hand of the Lord when, after prolonged contests with the enemies of the Reformation, a national recognition and solemn sanction of her constitution, as it had been settled by her own authority according to the word, was at last obtained, first in the act of parliament 1567, and again more completely in the act of parliament 1592, and since regarded by her as the great constitutional charter of her Presbyterian government and freedom.'

The act goes on to say: 'Holding firmly to the last, as she holds still, and through God's grace will ever hold, that it is the duty of civil rulers to recognise the truth of God according to his word, and to promote and support the kingdom of Christ without assuming any jurisdiction in it, or any power over it; and deeply sensible, moreover, of the advantages resulting to the community at large, and especially to its more destitute portions, from the public endowment of pastoral charges among them,' &c.

In the Assembly of 1852, a majority of the Synod of Original Seceders was admitted into the Free Church, on the ground of a representation and appeal, which is declared to be 'in no respect inconsistent with the standards of the Church, or with the principles for which she has been known to contend in the best and purest periods of her history.' Part of the said representation is as follows: 'We believe that nations in their national capacity, and rulers as rulers, are subject to his (that is, Christ's) authority, and bound, according to the nature of the power bestowed upon them,

to do what in them lies to promote his cause and glory. We believe that the Church and the State, being equally ordinances of God, equally subject to Christ's authority, and equally bound to advance his interests, ought, in accordance with the respective powers conferred on them, to support one another in promoting what is good, and especially that they ought to co-operate together for promoting the glory of God, and the real welfare of man.' Dr Candlish, speaking on that occasion, said: 'To-night we stand out as uniting upon the ground of opposition to Erastianism on the one hand, and Voluntaryism on the other. This is in substance—in short compass—the ground and foundation of our present union. We stand out as united together upon this common opposition to Erastianism on the one hand, and Voluntaryism on the other. If we had not been practically testifying against Erastianism, our brethren would not have been prepared to join with us; and if they had not been practically testifying against Voluntaryism, and that in circumstances of peculiar difficulty and trial, I venture to say we would not have been prepared to unite with them.'

In the Assembly of 1853, Dr Candlish further said: 'For my part, so far from having any intention to accommodate our principles and practice to the principles and practice of other non-established churches in Scotland, I confess, to my mind, and I believe to the minds of many, the voluntary principle, as it is called, has come out since the Disruption as an infinitely worse thing than we ever thought it looked before the Disruption. I

thoroughly feel that I have got more insight since the Disruption, within the last few years, into the falsehood in principle, and mischief in practice, of the Voluntary doctrine than ever we had before.'

In 1854, as the Established Church had not only maintained her ground, but was rapidly extending it, numerous conferences were held between ministers and elders of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches for the promotion of union. Several Free Churchmen declared that the dissenters had become rank voluntaries, and that, according to Dr Merle d'Aubigné, the foundation principle of Voluntaryism, as held in Scotland, was that religion had nothing to do with the civil magistrate, and that the civil magistrate had nothing to do with religion, a species of atheism which D'Aubigné was surprised should be held by any Christian community. But they were reminded that that statement was indignantly disclaimed at the time, and that even then it was regarded as an insult which could not be easily forgotten—while one of their number, in a plea for reunion with the Free Church, after quoting the 'godless dogma,' thus expresses himself: 'We should like to raise the hue and cry after such an atheistic character; and therefore we propose a reward of one thousand pounds for every dissenting minister or man, who can be caught holding such an opinion, provided he is still out of Bedlam.' Is there any man out of Bedlam who would offer such a reward now?

In 1855, Dr Candlish, in his Manse Fund speech in Glasgow, said: 'We ought, as a church, to cultivate the closest and most intimate relations of Christian brotherhood with the non-established

churches in the land, and especially with our Presbyterian brethren adhering to other bodies who have left the Establishment; but with all our friendly feelings towards them, and our anxiety to co-operate in every good work, we can never forget that, as regards them, the position we claim to occupy is this, that we are the Church of Scotland, from which they seceded, and to which, according to the principles of their seceding fathers, they might fairly be expected to return. I do not, of course, expect our friends of the United Presbyterian body, or other bodies not established, to acknowledge and admit that claim to the full extent to which we make it; but, nevertheless, I hold it to be of vast importance to the interests of Presbyterianism in Scotland in the long-run, and these I think are identified with those of the Church of Christ, that we should maintain our position as the Church of Scotland, from which the Erskines and Fishers seceded, and to which their descendants may be expected to return.'

In 1857 many leading laymen of both churches subscribed a declaration, that in the event of a union, the questions of the civil magistrate's authority in religion, and of endowments, should be matter of forbearance. But not only did the Free Church ecclesiastical leaders refuse to sanction such a union, but some of them were inclined to subject the movers in this matter to formal ecclesiastical censure.

In 1860 the Free Church found herself unexpectedly confronted with the Cardross case, in which the minister appealed to the civil court to

declare the sentence pronounced upon him by the General Assembly to be null and void. The Free Church pleaded that the sentences complained of, being spiritual acts, done in the ordinary course of discipline by a Christian church tolerated and protected by law, it was not competent for the civil court to reduce them, and that the actions should therefore be dismissed. The Lord Ordinary repelled this objection, and his judgment was unanimously affirmed by the court. Want of means to prolong the contest compelled the minister at last to withdraw his action; but, from the language of the Lord Chancellor in a subsequent case, it is evident that the civil courts claim the right to review, and, if they think proper, to reverse the most sacred acts of voluntary non-established church courts.

In 1863 the proposed union between the non-established Presbyterians of Scotland was first introduced into the General Assembly of the Free Church, and it was then explicitly and prominently declared that no attempt was to be made to compromise any of the essential principles maintained in the Disruption conflict; and, in appointing the Union Committee, the Assembly instructed it to aim at this, 'by all suitable means consistent with a due regard to the principles of this church.' Some doubts arose, however, in the course of the year whether the very appointment of a committee did not imply a willingness on the part of the Free Church to compromise her distinctive principles; and before the committee was reappointed in 1864, an assurance was given that the Assembly was not to be held as admitting that they were

prepared to make any modifications. In 1867, the Union Committee gave in their report to the Assembly, and a motion containing the following words was carried by a majority of 346 to 120: 'As regards the first head of the programme, considered in itself, there appears to be no bar to the union contemplated.' A large number of members protested against this resolution on the following, among other, grounds: 'Because the resolution as adopted implies an abandonment and subversion of an undoubtedly constitutional principle of the Free Church of Scotland.' They held that this resolution was to the effect that the Assembly saw no bar to union with those who declare the principle of a church establishment to be sinful, being, as is alleged by them, opposed to an express 'ordinance of Christ.' They maintained that this resolution, if confirmed, would be an entire abandonment on the part of the Free Church of one of the distinctive principles of the ten years' conflict. That conflict might have been avoided if the Free Church had been willing to take that ground at first, whilst, by taking it then, they would proclaim that they formerly convulsed the kingdom unnecessarily, and were 'martyrs by mistake.' So strong was the feeling against this union on the part of a large number, both of ministers and members, that it is believed, on good grounds, the Free Church would have been broken up had not the scheme been abandoned. The feeling was intensified by the publication of a statement by the United Presbyterian Committee on disestablishment and disendowment, in which, waxing bolder in consequence of the

disestablishment of the Irish Church, they declared that they 'owed it to the cause of truth identified with their history, to hold forth, as well as to hold fast, a distinctive testimony against civil establishments of religion, as radically injurious to the interests of religion, opposed to the genius of its institutions, and fraught with political and social injustice.' It also stated that 'the system is unscriptural.' In the Assembly of the Free Church in 1873, a disruption of the Free Church was anticipated by many of her own members, and it would assuredly have taken place had the attempt to establish an absolute and unqualified mutual eligibility of ministers between the United Presbyterian and Free Churches been successful. The crisis, however, was averted by a proposal made by Dr Candlish, which embodied a clear admission of the principles of the Free Church on the subject of national religion—for ministers of other churches were to be eligible for admission only on the express condition that they should previously receive, in any case of a proposed call, distinct information of the peculiar principles of the Free Church, and should clearly assent to those before their settlement. This was all the outcome in the way of union of ten years' protracted conferences.

In the following year—namely, in 1874—patronage, under which the Church of Scotland had groaned, and against which she had struggled and petitioned for centuries, was abolished, and the Act of Queen Anne repealed. Thus the occasion of all the past secessions from the Church of Scotland was removed, and the great outstanding grievance

and grudge, against which all her enemies had pointed the finger of scorn, was swept away. So far, however, from this conciliating the sects who differed from her, it only alienated their leaders more completely than before; who declared that the abolition of patronage was the first step towards disestablishment, and who ever since have manifested the bitterest hostility towards her, simply because she is an Established Church.

Unless we have entirely failed to read aright the ecclesiastical history of Scotland, the conclusion at which we must arrive is this, that whether the principles now advocated by dissenters be right or wrong, they are not the principles of the leaders of the different secessions, who would have seen in the abolition of patronage and in the present condition of the Church of Scotland the removal of all their objections, both to her polity and doctrine, and would have been more ready to return to her communion than they were to forsake it. There is now far less patronage in the Established Church than in any of the non-established churches in the land; for in the Church of Scotland the voice of the poorest member is as potential in the election of a minister, as that of the richest. But there is a temptation in non-established churches to defer to the opinion of the richest man in the congregation, especially where the great bulk of the members are poor, because, by alienating him and electing a minister to whom he is opposed, they may lead him to withhold his large subscription, and find themselves thereby unable to support the minister of their choice. Over and over again have complaints been made by

the members of dissenting churches, that such a one always gets the minister of his choice appointed.

Whatever may be said of Voluntaryism, voluntary liberality is becoming gradually extinct. I mean Christian liberality, free from compulsion of any kind, whether legal or social—whether from the fear of civil law, or of man's opinion. Voluntary giving is spontaneous giving—giving because the cause is good, and because our conscience tells us it has a claim upon our support—giving in proportion to the goodness of the cause, and our ability to contribute; not giving in proportion to the pressure that is brought to bear upon us, and the amount of publicity which is likely to be given to the amount of our gifts—giving secretly while we live, and not waiting till the world will read the ostentatious publication of the amount of our legacies after we are dead. I have no hesitation in affirming that there is not a single church in Christendom which would stake its existence for a single year upon this pure voluntary principle.

I maintain that there is far more real voluntary liberality in the Church of Scotland than in any dissenting communion; and, certainly, there is far less compulsoryism applied to the members of the congregation in order to raise money either for God's cause or for God's poor. It is unfortunately true that the Church, having been refused the assistance which she was entitled to expect from the State in overtaking the spiritual destitution of the country, has not trusted entirely to pure spontaneous giving, but has, in many instances, called in the aid of an ostentatious publicity to raise the

sums which were required for that purpose ; but nevertheless her members are left much more free as to giving or not giving, and as to the amount given, than in any other communion ; while her purely voluntary contributions are certainly not behind those which are given by the members of so-called Voluntary churches, who have been the chief corrupters of pure Christian liberality.

The sums raised are no indication of the power of the voluntary principle ; the methods and the motives must be taken into account ; and it must be confessed that, provided the sums raised be large, there is little attention paid to the motives which may have actuated the givers ; and it will, I think, be generally admitted that there is a growing tendency to have recourse to the arts of canvassing, and puffing, and advertising in order to secure large sums. The end is held to justify the means ; the test of a standing or falling congregation has come to be the subscription sheet, and instead of the left hand not knowing what the right hand does, all means are adopted to keep it thoroughly informed on the subject. Subscriptions rise in amount, in proportion to the degree of publicity which they are to receive. For an ordinary collection, the plate at the church door may be reckoned sufficient ; if twice that amount be required, a bag is handed round the pews, where each will at least see whether his neighbour gives or not ; a still larger amount is got when, instead of the bag, an open plate is employed, where each can see the sum which his neighbour has contributed. Larger results follow where the congregation is

individually canvassed, and the sums put down in the subscription book ; while the intimation that the names of contributors, with the sums opposite their names, will be printed and circulated among the congregation, raises the amount of *voluntary* contributions to its maximum. Who does not see that with the gradual increase of the amount in proportion to the degree of publicity to be given to the givers and their gifts, there is the presence of a compulsoryism of the worst possible character, and that the larger sums are given under the compulsion of the basest motives of ostentation, vanity, and rivalry. The motive of ostentation is worked in the interest of religion on a system, and collectors and other organisers of *voluntary* benevolence are regarded as successful in their work in proportion as they play skilfully on the infirmity of the benevolent, and by bribing men into giving, swell the church's funds.

Not only so, but *voluntary* congregations are frequently assessed at so much per communicant ; a certain sum must be raised by a congregation of so many members ; the sum is fixed by those who know not, and cannot know, what private and family claims many of these members may have to meet, and the threat is held out that unless that sum be raised, the congregation will be degraded to the position of a mere preaching-station. Notwithstanding all these expedients, there is an increasing complaint that the ministers are inadequately supported, and that, instead of the minimum stipend having been attained, it is being farther and farther receded from.

Nor can the number of costly churches that have been erected by dissenters be appealed to as a proof of the success of the voluntary principle. To say nothing of the fact that many of them were built in direct opposition to the Established Church, as is shown by the close proximity of many of them to the ancient building, and were put up under the stimulus of a rivalry which can scarcely be called generous—it is a notorious fact that a very large number of those which have been built in recent years are heavily burdened with debt. This seems to be the characteristic of voluntary churches everywhere. Dr Talmage, a man well qualified to speak on the subject, said, on a recent visit to this country, ‘three-fourths of the churches in America are in debt.’ In the district with which I am most familiar, almost all the dissenting churches are in the same condition, and most of them, within a very recent period, have been attempting, by means of bazaars, to extricate themselves from debts amounting to thousands of pounds in some cases, and to hundreds in others. And, indeed, the bazaars which are now so universally resorted to, to extricate churches from pecuniary embarrassments, and which are justifiable only on the ground that it is impossible to obtain the funds necessary, in any other way, are a public confession of the failure of the voluntary principle. The compulsion that is used to secure workers; the time that is wasted in the preparation of articles for sale; the artifices that are employed to secure contributions of goods; the blandishments that are used to induce visitors to purchase; the extortionate prices that are frequently asked for

goods; the dishonesty which is often practised, on the ground that no change is given at this stall; the lotteries that have been publicly carried on there until the strong hand of the law threatened to suppress them, and which are still carried on in secret under different disguises; the jealousy which is excited among the different stallholders; the utter worldliness and frivolity of the whole scene and its surroundings—these are no small evils to be connected with a sacred work; and they have done more to secularise the Church, and to corrupt the true voluntary principle, than any other influence within the last thirty years. To so large an extent has public sentiment in the matter of giving been perverted by these means, that it is scarcely possible to obtain money for any work of piety or mercy, without making a public excitement of some kind; and what is contributed under this stimulus is merely the price paid for the excitement—the bazaar, the banners, the music, the speeches, the praise of men. What is so given is not given in obedience to the law of Christ, and with the love of Christ as the constraining motive.

It is said that we ought to have free-trade in everything, and that religion ought to be left to the law of supply and demand. To this I answer that, however safe it may be to leave the meat that perisheth—the food for the body—to the law of supply and demand, there is no such law in the spiritual world, and never has been. There was no demand on the part of the human race for spiritual food when Christ, the bread of life, came down from heaven and gave his body

to be broken for us. Had our Heavenly Father waited until the demand rose from a perishing world, it would have perished everlastingly. Had we waited until the heathen clamoured for the living bread, the missionaries now labouring in foreign lands would have been numbered by tens instead of by thousands. And were we to leave the provision for the spiritual hunger of those in our own land to the operation of the same law, there are large districts which would speedily relapse into heathenism.



ST GILES' LECTURES.

SIXTH SERIES—THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

LECTURE VI.

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, AND RELIGIOUS EQUALITY.

By Rev. ANDREW GRAY, M.A., Minister of the Parish of Dalkeith.

THE modern doctrine of equality is that justice requires that all people should live in society as equals; that command and obedience are but unfortunate necessities, that human progress has been historically a progress from a law of force to a condition in which equal association becomes the general rule, and that already, in this and one or two other countries, the law of the strongest has been in many relations of life entirely abandoned.¹

Is equality either an actual fact or a possible advantage? If inequality necessarily exists, is it unjust or inexpedient for human law to recognise and profit by it?

¹ *Vide* Stephen on *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*, p. 208.

Equality is not the law of nature, and this not in any merely trivial sense. It is possible that inequalities might be so minute in their nature, and so insignificant in their worth, that the laws of a prudent human government may ignore them with impunity. If one who aspires to be a soldier is up to the required standard in height, it is a matter of no moment that he is a quarter of an inch higher or lower than his nearest comrade in the regiment. But there are certain ineradicable differences among human beings that cannot be thus passed by as of no practical significance. Foremost among these are the differences of age and sex. A child is in a state involving submission, dependency, obedience; a parent, or one in advancing years, has normally accorded to him a position of authority and veneration. A young person who is being taught, stands on a different footing from his teacher. There is the equally undeniable inequality of sex. Women are on a different platform from men. There are many qualities which they equally possess. They have the same species of mental and moral endowments, and spiritual aptitudes and aspirations. There are duties the one may discharge as well as the other. There are rights also which may be claimed by the one as well as the other. But it would be cruel for any individual or state to put women unconditionally in the same position as men; to exact from them, to the fullest extent, the service which may, for patriotic ends, be exacted from men. The very idea of compelling women to serve as soldiers, even in a nation's sorest straits, however welcome any voluntary service they could render

would be, is abhorrent to all civilised governments. A nation throttled by an assailing foe has, however, a right to such service at the hands of its men. There are other aspects of inequality between the sexes, in respect of education and household administration.

There is, moreover, no such thing as natural equality among the male members of a community. There are men more richly dowered by nature, both in body and mind, than others. They start with a good constitution and a lively intelligence. Their heart is the throne of will; their quick and broad sympathies fit them to guide and govern others. They are magnets drawing men unto them. Wise to know, and bold to do and dare, they become the centre of minor forces and more sluggish instrumentalities. They believe in themselves, in their power of work, in the massiveness of their own nature, in the victorious energy of their own determination, in the law of cause and effect operating in the world of mind as in the world of matter, and in that law operating on their behalf. These men, with their abundance of vital energy, go forward in life to be the exponents of other men's aims, the representatives of other men's wills, to be leaders of thought, guides in action, inventors of mechanical contrivances that anticipate the needs of the coming age, investigators into the secrets of nature, which are to constitute the basis of new and vast industries, explorers of the peaks of mountains, the depths of oceans, the ice-bound poles, and the burning tropical deserts. Napoleon magnetised thousands of the thieves of France, made them into

obedient and devoted soldiers, true as steel to him, and valorous unto death for their country. Wherever there is fixedness of purpose, concentration of energy, even in the case of ordinary men, there must, in the long-run, be exhibited a might that is victorious. Men of common gifts, devoted heart and soul to some particular pursuit or line of thought, become possessed of a special insight. Continuity of concentrated effort leads to some measure of success in every rank of life. The immortal Newton did what he did, not more by his great native endowments, than, as he tells us, by 'always intending his mind.' A great Athenian administrator rose to distinction by dividing his time between the market-place and the council-house. And as concentration of energies and affections gives strength to the nature, so does diligence give speed and certainty to that strength. Thus the original creative endowments of men, the concentration of their efforts and their diligence in the cultivation of their powers, separate men from each other, raising up some and casting down others, enlarging some and narrowing others. The quality of the morality involved in the process of exaltation or degradation, does not prevent us from seeing that it does not seem to be intended that men be equal in respect of gifts and uses, that they stand massed together in a dull monotony of uniform capabilities. The rising or the falling to the world's judgment, may be because the motive was generous, and the conscience sensitive; it may also be because the motive was selfish, and the conscience dulled. The result everywhere is palpable inequality among men, and

that result is so distinct and continuous, that it seems inevitable in the present constitution of things. It inheres in the system of this world. It is not wholly due to man's self-will and perversity; it is not simply man's disorder; it fits in with divine arrangements; it is God's order. Do what men may, they cannot, with the differences of capabilities imparted to them at birth, attain to the same height, and length, and depth, and breadth of character and will. Accordingly it would seem to be just and expedient for a nation to recognise the fact that there are important inequalities among men, and to adapt its legislation to that fact.

The Church of Scotland, while regarding *religious equality* as unreasonable and unattainable, stands by the principle of *religious liberty*. Every man is free to work out his own capabilities in his own way, to come to his own conclusions, and to abide by them. There is to be the right of private judgment, freedom of conscience, liberty of opinion. No man is to be treated as a machine, a creature to be kept in a predetermined groove, not merely of action, but of thought and faith. He is not to be interfered with by an outside authority in his endeavours, according to his light and gifts, to think out, revere, and realise the ideal of his life. No power has a right to intervene between the individual human soul and God.

The claim put forth by a fellow-man, or by an organised society of our fellow-men, to infallibility, or to an arrogance and presumption little short of it, empowering him or it, under pains and penalties, to thrust a particular faith upon our reason and con-

science, is one so extravagant that it defeats its own end. Such a claim, to be listened to, requires to be backed up by a chain of cumulative evidence of abnormal strength. Coercion, under any circumstances, is a poor substitute for the manifestation of truth. A particular type of character may be wrong or sinful, and yet the worst remedy to apply may be the repressive power of civil authority. Selfishness, unthankfulness, and unkindness are universally condemned, yet no civil government could long abide, that inflicted punishment for these offences. Let both the tares and wheat grow together until the harvest, lest in human fallibility, short-sightedness, and partisanship, while we pluck up the tares, we root out the wheat also. Those who truly grasp the Christian faith are assuredly not warranted in inflicting pains and penalties upon men, merely for differences of opinion or profession in religion.

It may be that these differences may be embittered into animosities. It was the case at first that our Lord came not to send peace on earth, but a sword. It did happen at Philippi that the preaching of the gospel was the cause of popular commotion. It has happened again and again that public tranquillity has been broken by religious disputes. But whatever may be said in favour of the civil authority taking cognisance of acts of violence, repressing riots, and punishing the lawless, just as the civil authority might be summoned to discharge a similar duty in the event of public disturbance on the occasion of the introduction of new machinery in agriculture or manufactures, a clear distinction exists between punishing a man for an act of violence and punish-

ing a man for a difference of faith. Law and order must be maintained, if civil society is to exist. Liberty of conscience ought not to shelter a social wrong. Religion ought not to cloak with impunity crimes pernicious to civil society. The immolation of human victims to propitiate the idol Moloch, would find no toleration in this country. The frantic orgies of shameless degradation and open licentiousness attendant on some religious observances, would not be sanctioned. But when we look at more refined and subtle forms of what many persons would denounce as injurious and wrong, it is not so easy to draw the line between liberty of thought and liberty of action, between the expression of a faith and the completion of it in a deed.

We may say generally, that the punishment of a man for an opinion, has no tendency to rebut the arguments in favour of that opinion, that it is its apparent contrariety to reason and not to law that has to be combated; and that the interests of society will be sufficiently safe in the hands of those who can confront ignorance and error and falsehood with truth. But when the question is raised more definitely, what warrant has society to interfere with an individual liberty, though that liberty leads to personal vice and to constructive injury to a neighbourhood—answers may vary. John Stuart Mill says that the only warrant is self-protection; that there is freedom to unite for any purpose not involving harm to others; that gambling ought to be tolerated; that personal vices should be left to take their course. He says distinctly that legislative interference for the removal of a traffic which is a

social grievance to many, would be monstrous, and far more dangerous than any single violation of liberty. For the sake of the greater good of human freedom, society can afford to bear the inconvenience caused by constructive injury to society, through conduct which neither violates any specific duty to the public, nor occasions perceptible hurt to any assignable individual. The reasons he urges are: *First*, Because society has had absolute power over all the early portion of men's existence—over their childhood and nonage; and if it has not trained them to be capable of acting reasonably, society has itself to blame; and *secondly*, Because grown-up persons, when commanded by society, will rebel, and the odds are that society will interfere wrongly, and in the wrong place.

This is undoubtedly an extreme view of liberty of thought, expression, and action; and the only limitation of it by Justice Stephen, in criticising Mill's position, is that, while it is admitted that compulsory interference with unusual and offensive experiments in living is delicate and may be blundering, it does not follow that it should not exist; that, if a man ought to be punished for vices when they do harm to assignable individuals, there is no just reason why he should not be punished when these vices do harm to an indefinite district inhabited by human beings; that there is such a thing as the moral coercion of public opinion as well as legal coercion; that public opinion ought to put a restraint upon vice, not to such an extent merely as is necessary for definite self-protection, but generally on the ground that

vice is a bad thing, from which men ought, by appropriate means, to restrain each other. The practically important matter in dealing with vicious persons who, by their sayings and doings, offend the public conscience in such a land as ours, is not criminal law, but the restraints of public opinion—social condemnation of the wrong-doing. Such are the views of thoughtful men, shared in by many; thus highly is the liberty of the individual prized; thus carefully is it sought to be guarded.

Personal freedom is indeed limited and restrained; but only when and in so far as its exercise is clearly hostile to the commonweal. There are, for example, laws against blasphemy and obscene literature; and men can be punished for uttering blasphemy and publishing and circulating obscenity, yet such is the current of public opinion in favour of liberty, that only in extreme cases, and occasionally, are these laws put in operation. We see what occurs around us now in the political world. Men may live in this country who are devotedly attached to republican sentiments on the one hand, or to imperial rule on the other. Subjects of this kingdom may desire the repeal of the Union, or the severance of Ireland from the United Kingdom. Freedom is given to them not only to hold these sentiments, but to proclaim them and commend them to others. They may reason calmly and dispassionately in favour of this view or that view. If there is no incentive to a disturbance of the peace, or acts of open disloyalty, the State does not interfere. It is only when freedom of discussion assumes an active hostility to existing social order, or a revolutionary aspect,

that the State thinks it worth its while to deal in restraints. Concerning matters of little moment, the law does not care. In such a country as ours, it recognises the worth of liberty, it knows its own liability to err, and is guided by a practical expediency. So in the religious world, freedom is given to even the wildest speculations on every form of religious creed. Atheism has been propounded and discussed. Every form of Deism may have its logical advocates and antagonists. No restriction is placed upon the promulgation of philosophical doubt or destructive biblical criticism. It is only when religious opinions enter, by enticing suggestion or direct declaration, into a region of activity hostile to social well-being, that a State such as ours has to consider whether the time has not come for it to deal penally with obscene teaching and notorious blasphemy, as religious offences contravening the public good. Not in every case will a wise State intervene. It will trust in general to the power of truth. But when the case is heinous, when the language is unmeasured, and offensive; when the tendencies of the teaching are towards a kind of conduct which is impoverishing or hurtful to the State, then legal repression of these religious tenets becomes a right pertaining to the State, as concerned about the peace and good order of society, and the well-being of its subjects.

Accordingly, it may be clearly seen that the extent to which liberty in expressing and propagating one's religious opinions in a land like ours is limited, cannot be a matter of regret to any well-disposed subjects. To them, a law against vile

teaching is no more felt to be a limitation of liberty than a law against nudity in the open street.

This recognition of religious freedom has undoubtedly been tardy. The lesson has been slowly learned. The claim towards something like infallibility has been put forth in turn by every dominant school of Christian government, worship, and thought. Christianity at the time of Constantine was intolerant and persecuting. Circumstances had changed, but the spirit of persecution survived. Under the four edicts of Diocletian, issued at the beginning of the fourth century, Christians had been deprived of their civil privileges and books; their churches had been doomed to destruction; their ministers first imprisoned and then tortured; and all Christians racked with an ingenuity of hate to compel them to renounce Christianity, and sacrifice to the pagan gods. When Christianity was established under Constantine, severity was turned from the Christians to the pagans. Edicts were put forth to destroy the heathen temples, and prevent the offering of sacrifices. The books of the Arians were to be committed to the flames. Concealment of these heretical books was to be punished by death. Other heretics, such as the Novatians, Valentinians, and Marcionites, were deprived of the liberty of worshipping either in public or private places; and all their places for prayer were confiscated. The practice of persecution for heresy signalised the Romish Church more or less in every land for many an age. So long as it had the power, and wherever it could exercise the power with any measure of success, it employed force to repress

religious dissent, and in some cases, as in Spain and Portugal, it used the most extreme measures to extirpate any dissenting or protesting faith. The Reformation did not get rid of the intolerant and persecuting spirit. Though claiming the right of private judgment for themselves, the Reformers refused to concede it fully to others. Under the discipline of Calvin four hundred and fourteen public trials, it is said, took place before the Consistory of Geneva in the years 1558 and 1559, and these terminated not always in mere church censures, but in civil punishments. Nor, however many excuses we may find for his conduct, can we wholly free from blame that great Reformer in the case of Servetus. The Westminster Confession of Faith has used language that might be easily construed into a justification of the most active compulsion on the occurrence of diversities of religious belief. 'God hath armed the civil magistrate,' it says, 'with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil-doers;' 'he hath authority, and it is his duty to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed.'

The English legislature determined, in the reign of William III., that Roman Catholics were not entitled to purchase estates or to inherit lands by descent; that popish priests were to be banished, and if they returned to England they were to be subjected to perpetual imprisonment; and that one hundred pounds were to be offered as a reward to

any one who would give such information as would convict a resident in England of being a popish priest. In 1700 an Act still more stringent and drastic was passed in Scotland. These extreme measures, though called into active operation on certain special occasions, could not be carried out to the letter. They gradually fell into disuse, and in 1778 the positively penal clauses in King William's Act were repealed. The negatively penal clauses still continued. Roman Catholics could not enjoy offices of trust; they were prohibited from taking any part in legislation; they had no vote in electing a member for parliament. They could not teach schools unless they had been first licensed by the ordinary, and subscribed a declaration of conformity to the liturgy of the Church of England, and waited on the public ordinances of religion in that church. The saying of mass was punishable by a fine of two hundred merks; the hearing of mass, by a fine of one hundred merks. They were not allowed to keep arms in their houses, or to come within ten miles of London, under a penalty of one hundred pounds; the same punishment was assigned to any of them going to court to pay respect, with others in their station, to the sovereign; and if they travelled beyond five miles from their own homes, the punishment decreed was the forfeiture of all their worldly goods. If any one left England to be educated in the Romish faith abroad, if any one in England sent such a person abroad for that purpose, or paid in whole or part for his education and support, they, each one, forfeited all legal standing, all right to acquire legacies, all worldly goods and chattels, and

their real estate for life. A Protestant who turned Roman Catholic, or sought to proselytise others to the Romish faith, was adjudged guilty of high treason. In 1779 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland came to a unanimous resolution, of which the following is a portion: 'The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, having taken into their serious consideration the public alarm excited in this part of the United Kingdom from the apprehension of an intention to repeal the laws enacted to prevent the growth of popery, think it their duty to make this public declaration of their sentiments on a subject in which the interests of religion and of their country are so deeply concerned. . . . They declare their firm attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty, and their earnest desire that universal toleration and liberty of conscience may be extended to *Protestants of every denomination*; but they think it their duty also to declare their firm persuasion that a repeal of the penal laws now in force against papists would be highly inexpedient; dangerous and prejudicial to the best interests of religion and civil society in this part of the United Kingdom.' The spirit of the times, however, was tending to the side of forbearance and toleration, and the executive became increasingly lenient in administering all penal clauses. The public mind, nevertheless, had to be agitated for half a century before any remedial measures were adopted by the legislature in favour of religious liberty and toleration. In 1828 the Test and Corporation Acts, which required all those appointed to offices in corporations in England to

take the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England, were repealed, and the following year saw the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act. After a lengthened discussion, the abolition of University Tests was carried; Jewish Disabilities were removed; dissenters were allowed to perform marriages in their own chapels. Kindred liberty and toleration, in so far as these were needed, were bestowed on Scotland. Theological chairs in our universities are still subjected to religious tests; professors in non-theological chairs are free for twenty-three hours of the day to say and do what they please; in the one hour they teach, they are prohibited from 'directly or indirectly teaching or inculcating any opinions opposed to the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or to the Westminster Confession of Faith,' and from exercising the functions of their offices to the prejudice or subversion of the Church of Scotland, as by law established, or the doctrines and privileges thereof. Members of Parliament, on taking their seats, have to say, in taking the oath—unless they have conscientious objections to taking an oath, in which case an affirmation is permitted to them—'So help me God.' There is also, and above all, the Act for securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government, according to which, among other matters, the successive sovereigns of Great Britain 'shall, in all time coming, at his or her accession to the crown, swear and subscribe that they shall inviolably maintain and preserve the foresaid settlement of the true Protestant religion, with the government, worship, discipline, rights, and

privileges of the Church, as established by the laws of this kingdom, in prosecution of the Claim of Right.' With the exception of restrictions like these, there is perfect liberty to men of all creeds or of no creed. No reasonable man can complain that there is much curtailment of liberty here ; many men will say the curtailment is proper and wholesome ; but if still in one or two particulars the sphere of liberty may be widened without injury to the public good, there are as true friends of freedom within the Church of Scotland as anywhere else. With the exception of one or two offices, all positions in the government of the country and in the corporations of the United Kingdom may be held in these days by Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, by Nonconformists as well as members of the Church of England, by dissenters as well as members of the Church of Scotland. The schools are open to all pupils ; the universities are open to all students. The best training the State can give may be bestowed on those who believe in this religion or in that, or in no religion whatever ; no trade or profession can be monopolised ; the highest honours and positions are within the reach of all. We approve of religious liberty as one important social factor ; we will stand by it to the last, and we will strive to bring about, as completely as possible, the result that no man suffer a civil wrong from his religious beliefs.

But what in that case becomes of equality ? Is this freedom, now so fully enjoyed, compatible with equality ? If Samson is free to develop his gigantic powers of body until thousands of his fellow-men quail before him ; and the doors of the gates of a

city be carried like staves upon his shoulder ; and the pillars of his mighty prison-house bend under his grasp, where is his equality with ordinary men ? If Leibnitz has a mental massiveness that can comprehend all human knowledge of his period within himself, and is at liberty to work out his powers to the extent of their capability, where is his equality with the untaught multitude, or even the scholars of his time ? Suppose a certain piece of land was divided equally between a certain number of farmers. There is equality of possession of land to begin with ; but if you allow individual liberty, the equality will not long exist. The farmers cannot be all equally gifted ; they cannot have precisely the same bodily strength, the same mental foresight, the same worldly ambition. If liberty is accorded to the one with the largest gifts to trade with his talents, and to occupy with his might on his farm, while the others are in comparison with him more or less weaklings, short-sighted blunderers, lazily content with the least that life can be supported on ; then the labour of the one is more wealth than the labour of any of the others, and that inequality, once begun, goes on in a geometrical ratio. The liberty of acquiring property is at the very threshold of all liberty, and with that liberty arise private property and growing worldly inequality. The cry of liberty and equality is self-contradictory. It is the embodiment of the spite and hate of the dissatisfied and the unsuccessful. It is the lazy saying to the industrious, the reckless saying to the frugal, the vicious saying to the well disposed : ‘ Cast in your lot among us ; let us all have one purse ; share and share alike,

put all the fruit of your labours into a common stock—or you shall die the death.’ Equality can be maintained only by force being continually applied by the lower upon the higher strata of society. Experience in socialistic schemes has shown that that kind of force cannot be long successfully applied, and that consequently inequality is seen to be a necessity of every earthly state and government.

Liberty and equality cannot exist in partnership. Inequality is a natural necessity; it is infixed into the constitution of things in this world. And as the government of this world is a moral government, evil being on the whole punished, good being on the whole rewarded; as the constitution of things in this world is so preponderatingly on the side of human good, inequality, emerging as a natural necessity, as bound up in the constitution of things, comes before us with the claim of being conducive to human profit and progress.

But it may be said: ‘Let there be religious liberty to the fullest extent compatible with social welfare, and let there be perfect scope for the inevitable inequalities of religious systems in influence and acceptance; but let there be no legal recognition of a privileged inequality; let there be a fair field to all, but no favour.’

This view brings us face to face with the principle of national religion, a subject already ably unfolded in this course of lectures. Still, while resting on what was then laid down, it is impossible not to give some consideration to the matter here. If inequality is a necessity of human life, should not a nation

own and be influenced by that fact? If privileged inequality is an undoubted national gain in other spheres of human activity, in the senate, the camp, and the school, why should it not be welcomed and upheld in the moral and religious domain? History, and especially our own history, is in favour of this position. There has been a natural growth and development of recognised and privileged classes among us.

In the growth of our natural life by historical necessity, men have arisen, when the day demanded, to be its sovereigns and dictators, to lead its armies on the field of battle, to decide contested questions between neighbours, and to instruct the young and rising generation in the understanding of the methods and activities of lives of future usefulness; and if, without any craft of Church or State, men thus normally and necessarily arose to be governors, commanders, judges, teachers; and if the origination of these privileged classes was on the basis of national needs, and in response to national desires; and if the history of these privileged classes has been a history in favour of law and order and progress against chaos, anarchy, and decay; is there any reason hostile to a privileged class of religious teachers? May there not be an equally rational basis, on the ground of national need, desire and usefulness, for them as for the others? Well-informed students of history know that the Established Churches of these lands, far from being created by the State, contributed to create the State. Established Churches are no artificial preferential adjuncts to the State, but the natural

expression of the religious sentiments of the people. They sprang into existence, they grew in influence, they were supported and protected in their position by law, because they supplied needs and fostered ideals of national life. They were lifted out of the common rut of life for the common good. They were called unto a higher place to render greater service. This call arose far more truly from the people than from the crown. The spiritual interest and Christian liberality of many, issued by-and-by in a munificent provision for their support; that endowed position widened the area of their usefulness and extended their power, until as a becoming resultant they were acknowledged, supported, and protected as national institutions. In their gradual ascent to this privileged position, the general agreement of opinion was that they represented a higher idea of life than was found in war, or the chase, or ordinary activities, and that they were worthy of all the homage and veneration and obedience that could be tendered to them. The inequality involved in their position of privileged superiority was generally acknowledged as a public boon and a national gain. Religious equality then would have meant national ignorance, degradation, and irreligion. The recognition of a privileged class of religious teachers was a wholesome national growth; the form of the recognition was determined by the genius of the people. At the Reformation the National Church of Scotland was continued, though on anti-Roman Catholic lines and with diminished revenues. The people, as a whole, wanted the change; the making of the change was not felt by any considerable section of

the people as a political or religious injustice. The change in the religious sentiment was thus in a real sense national, and the inequality implied in the privileged position of the Church of the Reformation being established by law, was welcomed as conducive to the public benefit. At the Revolution Settlement, the inclinations of the people were towards Presbyterianism, and these inclinations were expressed and consolidated by statute. The preference of Presbyterianism to Episcopacy may have been regretted by a few, but no cry of political or religious injustice was raised, because that form of the Christian faith that was predominantly acceptable to the Scottish people was recognised and protected by law. The keenest zealots, then, would have said: 'Better that, than that the principle of national religion be surrendered.' A different set of circumstances has since arisen. The Roman Catholics stood apart and worshipped by themselves, when the Reformation took place. At the Revolution Settlement, the Christians outside the pale of the national Church were augmented by the Episcopalians. But afterwards, in course of time, these bodies of Christians, external to the national Church, were added to, by new sects that sprung up from within the Church itself. The largest of these are well known now under the names of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches. From them—from the former of these churches distinctly and articulately, from the latter of them with qualifying phrases—as well as from the intellectual movement that has been influencing this land, as every land in Christendom, with secularism and scepticism, has

originated the cry of political injustice against the Established Church of Scotland.

Dr Heugh, one of the ablest and fairest of all voluntary controversialists, in his *Considerations on Civil Establishments of Religion*, thus formulates the old voluntary position. 'Our pleading, whether just or unjust, is not against the establishment of one denomination of Christians, of one form of Christianity, but against the establishment of any denomination, of any form of religion' (p. 13). 'The legislative establishment of the Church implies injustice. Justice requires that the State should extend equal favour to all on whom it imposes equal burdens, and from whom it exacts equal allegiance. A departure from this principle, by demanding the same allegiance from all classes of the community, and imposing the same burdens on them, while injury is inflicted on any one class or favour denied to it, is injustice. Civil establishments of religion are chargeable with this injustice. They consist in selecting one class of the community as the objects of the favour of the State, in distinguishing that class, not by its services to the State, not by the measure of its allegiance, not by the amount of its burdens, but solely by its opinions, and in extending in a particular form the patronage of the State to this class exclusively. To it, the State grants a standing in law, as a recognised body or corporation, which it denies to others; it forms a connection with it from which it excludes others; it secures to it emoluments which it does not secure to others; it compels by the force of law all other classes to contribute their proportion of money, or other property,

to the support of this one, which on its part is required to contribute nothing to the support of others. All this is extending a species of favour and support to one class, which is denied to others equally faithful, equally submissive to the State. Is not this essential, unqualified injustice?' (p. 35). The only remedy for this injustice, it is now urged, is religious equality.

An examination of the grounds of this charge of injustice is indispensable, and may be profitable. It is alleged that the State has selected one class of the community as the object of its favour, and extended its patronage to that class alone, and that all such preference is an insult and injury to many others equally deserving. The answer to this allegation, first of all, is that nothing can be more historically incorrect than to say that the Established Church of Scotland is the creation of statecraft. It was the people's church from the first. There was no rejection of others equally deserving of state patronage and support. There were none such then in existence. And ought not those who make such a charge, to come into court with clean hands? It is not for one moment maintained that the Church herself has been faultless. With a deeper spiritual life, and a more brotherly diplomacy, she might perhaps have avoided the Secession of last century. With a truer spiritual perspective, and a more appreciative sympathy, she might have avoided the pain and shame of deposing from the ministry some of her most gifted sons in the third and fourth decades of this century. The State, in the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, might, by

wise conciliation, have undone the mischief which was perpetrated in the reign of Queen Anne ; or the clamant majority, not surrendering their principles, but giving themselves to prayer and enlightenment, and possessing their souls in patience for a few years, might have prevented the lamentable Disruption. But though a measure of blame may cling to the National Church in these and other respects, much more blame must be laid on the shoulders of those who now, in the name of justice and equality, cry out against the mother that bore them. If they did not of their own free-will leave the national Church, they have of their own free will kept aloof from her in these latter days, despite every entreaty and every expression of desire for Presbyterian peace and union. In 1870 the General Assembly recorded 'their hearty willingness and desire to take all possible steps, consistently with the principles on which this Church is founded, to promote the reunion of churches having a common origin, adhering to the same Confession of Faith, and the same system of government and worship.' In 1878 the General Assembly authorised the Committee on union with other churches to approach other churches with an assurance that 'while the General Assembly maintain inviolate the principle of the national recognition of the Christian religion as contained in the Confession of Faith, and the sacredness of the ancient religious endowments, and steadfastly adhere to the doctrine of the Confession of Faith, and the Presbyterian system of church government and worship, they earnestly wish to consider what other churches may state, in frank

and friendly conference, as to the causes which at present prevent the other churches from sharing the trust now reposed in this Church alone.' In the answer that came from the Committee of the General Assembly of the Free Church, there occurred the following significant sentences: 'The Committee feel it to be their duty frankly to call the attention of their brethren of the Established Church to the Claim of Right adopted in 1842, and to the Protest laid on the table of the General Assembly in 1843. It is obvious that the terms of these documents prevent the Free Church from supporting the maintenance of the existing establishment as at present constituted. For these terms would manifestly require a legislative recognition, on the one hand, of the view as to the Scriptural foundation and original character of Scottish ecclesiastical arrangements exhibited in the Claim of Right; and, on the other hand, of the Free Church as the true representative of the Church which adopted it in 1842. The Committee represent their conviction that in that Claim and that Protest the principles are set forth on which alone the divided sections of Presbyterianism can ever be reunited.' 'A very large number of the ministers and elders of the Free Church is persuaded that in present circumstances a reunion of the churches in connection with State endowments cannot be accomplished in a satisfactory manner.' This reply closed the door to further correspondence. The Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Synod of United Original Seceders were willing to welcome Presbyterian union, provided all Presbyterians

accepted their peculiar convictions respecting the descending obligation of the National Covenant of Scotland, and of the Solemn League and Covenant. Union on the basis of a political and social revolution in Church and State was not to be thought of. The United Presbyterian Church frankly declared that 'it is impossible for it to contemplate sharing with the Established Church the trust reposed in it by the State.' 'It cannot make any advance towards actual union, in view of the present relations of the Assembly to the State.' No declinature could be plainer than that.

These Presbyterian bodies, then, have deliberately taken their stand outside the National Church. They have chosen and adhere to their own position. They have preferred the verdict of their own approving consciences to all the benefits the National Church was willing to bestow upon them. They felt that it was better for them to be without, not within her pale. The Church does not keep them without. It has an open door to every one of them who cares to enter. Its parochial machinery is within reach, and at the call of every parishioner. No man need feel himself without a Christian minister, or debarred from enjoying the offices of a Christian church. He has a right to worship in the parish church, and lay claim to the services of the parochial ministry; and nobly has the national Church within the last forty years striven to make herself commensurate in her ministering service to the wants of all the people. But there are those who will not enter her door, or profit by her agencies. They do this of set purpose, for reasons satisfactory to themselves. On what

ground can it be said that they who act thus are unjustly treated by those who avail themselves of the provision made for national religion? They glory in their separation from the mother-church; why should they complain? They themselves maintain and perpetuate the causes on the basis of which they cry out that they are unjustly treated, that others have a favour which they do not possess.

The Church's privileged position can be vindicated.—Equality may mean something very little or something very great. It may mean that two atoms are equal to each other, or two oceans. It all depends on what things are stated or desired to be equal to each other. If I want to build a house, it will not suffice to have any number of sand atoms on an equality; I want massive blocks of stone as well. So in society we find that men with exceptional gifts causatively occupy exceptionally elevated positions. Rulers, seniors, fathers, teachers are in a position of privileged superiority as compared with subjects, juniors, children, scholars. Where the privilege is not for selfish ease, but for the public good, inequality is not only justified, but becomes a necessity. Where it is for the purpose of giving a wholesome elementary education to every child born within the kingdom, or for quickening and enlarging that scientific knowledge which, valuable in itself, sooner or later becomes most valuable in its industrial results, or for administering law with a knowledge and independence that would give permanent satisfaction to a community, it is just and expedient that such inequality exist and be operative. If the privilege is to enable a man to do

the nation's work better than that work could be done without the privilege, a wise and understanding people will welcome such inequality. Such inequality is not injustice; it is wise expediency. Can the privileged position of the ministry of the Church of Scotland be thus vindicated? They are recognised and protected by law; they have a moderate independence from consecrated endowments. Have they that position to gratify their own taste and indulge their own inclinations? Is their office a sinecure? Do they give no return for their social elevation? Can it not be shown on a wide induction that they are as worthy of their privileged position as the teachers in our state-aided schools, the professors in our national universities, or the judges in our courts of law? Buckle, certainly not a partial witness, says of the Presbyterian clergy of Scotland: 'One thing they achieved which should make us honour their memory and repute them benefactors of their species. At a most hazardous moment, they kept alive the spirit of national liberty. What the nobles and the crown had put in peril, that did the clergy save. By their care the dying spark was kindled into a blaze. When the light grew dim and flickered on the altar, their hands trimmed the lamp and fed the sacred flame. This is their real glory, and on this they may well repose. They were the guardians of Scotch freedom, and they stood to their post. Where danger was, they were foremost.' Wordsworth has written: 'The sounder part of the Scottish nation know what good their ancestors derived from their Church, and feel how deeply the living generation is indebted to it.' The

truth is, the history of Scotland is indissolubly associated with the history of the Church of Scotland. The battles of the national life have been largely fought on ecclesiastical waters. Round the names of the great reformers, the heroes and martyrs of the Solemn League and Covenant, and the ecclesiastical leaders of every generation down to the present time, have surged the fervours of the nation's spirit. No mean names in literature rise before us ; but perhaps the most signal characteristic of the Church was, that through her inspiring spirit and under her superintending care, a system of education was maintained that reached the humblest grade in social life, and was accessible almost literally to the most secluded hamlet. Boys of pregnant parts might pass from the school of a remote and obscure parish to the national universities. Knowledge ran to and fro throughout the land, as the ends of the earth have testified. With a pure faith ; with a ritual, simple indeed, yet capable of being expanded into effective fitness to meet the demands of modern tastes and culture ; with but moderate endowments, the Church of Scotland has exercised a healthy influence on every corner of the land through many generations back ; the advocate of order, the favourer of progress ; annihilating to many, in no mean degree, the disadvantages of distance from the large cities ; encouraging learning, stimulating to honest industry, building the family life in purity, unity, and sturdy independence ; blessing the little ones by baptismal dedication, training the young in a godly discipline, gathering unto herself the energies and affections of the mature, soothing

the aged, and preparing the dying for their eternal rest; in all departments of existence, and for all classes of the community, wielding divine powers and conferring immortal blessings. In no previous period of her history has she done such faithful work to the nation as she has done during the last forty years. She never was so filled with knowledge, so absorbed by zeal, so penetrated by a spirit of holy concern for the great cause of the Head and Master, as in these latter days. The proof of this statement is to be seen in almost every one of her parishes in growing numbers, augmented liberality, and deepened spiritual life. During that period, while carrying on manifold other good works, she has bestowed and invested, for the religious teaching of the people of Scotland, no less a sum than upwards of two millions of pounds. The people of Scotland, enlightened, and not perplexed by disturbing side-issues, may well be trusted to answer the question, whether the privileged position of her ministry is an inequality that must be swept away as a political injustice, or whether it is an inequality that wisely and expediently conduces to the profit and progress of the nation.

Here it may be said, that supposing there were a measure of truth in the claim that the privileged position of the national Church is a national benefit, is it just to maintain it at the expense of those who feel aggrieved at the inequality? Is it just to compel by force of law reluctant support from the pockets of those who do not want an Established Church? In short, is it just to tax a landlord who is a dissenter, and who has to support his own church,

for the maintenance of the Established Church? This question has been already dealt with in a previous lecture, and it is enough now to say that the endowments of the Church can be taken from her by the State, just as any other kind of property may be taken by the State for national life or well-being; but that the State has no special hold upon the property of the Church; that the patrimony of the Church is in no special sense the property of the nation; that it was freely given by pious men for religious teaching; that it is localised in the separate parishes, and in each parish held by the Church for the religious benefit of the people. What is needed to support the Church in each separate parish is in no sense a tax upon the community. That is recognised by law, and from immemorial times, as owing to the Church. It is not paid by the State. The endowments of the Church are not assessments. They are trust-funds for national religion. The stipend is a mortgage on the lands of the parochial heritors. The land came to them by succession with this burden on it; or they purchased the land without paying for this mortgage. It never was the heritors' private property; it was always the Church's portion. This was and is the case in all rural parishes. In towns again, in many instances, if not in all, there were teinds for the support of the Church handed over to the municipal bodies as ecclesiastical trustees; and it is not by any means clear that from first to last the burghs have lost by their connection with the Church. It is true that a sum of £17,000 is paid annually from the Exchequer for the purpose of raising the stipends of certain

ministers; but in justification of that, it has to be remembered that at the Reformation old ecclesiastical endowments were plentifully appropriated by the State, including the bishops' rents, the property of the Church, now a source of revenue to the State. The Church, however, has no desire and no interest in maintaining any pecuniary liability which can be construed by reasonable and fair-minded men into an injustice. She is not freed from the pecuniary obligations of the world, or the ordinary laws that regulate the same; her ministers have to live and to pay their way like other men; and therefore the Church is not ashamed to claim her own, the gift of the pious dead, and to have that patrimony of her own supplemented by the free-will offerings of her worshipping people, in order that she may owe no man in the land anything but love. She seeks to be founded in righteousness, and to aim at those things that make for peace; and if there are any assessments that press unfairly, and foster bitter feelings in the minds of moderate men, she will, I am sure, consent, as she has consented before, to their removal, and help, yet again, in the effort. Likewise the Church will welcome and consider, with a view to a rational and amicable solution, any feasible proposal for a more effective use of her endowments, especially in the Highland counties, where so many, though favourable to the principle of the national recognition of religion, are without her pale.

What has thus been said may suffice to meet the clamant cry of political injustice. We have now to deal with the remedy of the Liberationists for this

ailment. The only remedy, we are told, is religious equality. Favour to one creed or church above others should be abolished, as an insult and injury to all the rest. What does this mean? It may mean, and probably does mean in the eyes of secularists, agnostics, and atheists, that all religions are on an equality in this respect, that they are all equally false, or equally useless, or equally unworthy to be taken into account by men of intelligence and thought. In the end of last century, France passed through a fiery experience under the sway of this principle; at the present moment she is treading the same vale of religious indifference. The lessons of ninety years ago were the terror of civilised Europe; the experience of the present gives no hostages of security for a stable future. Stripped of its fine words, it is seen to be rotten to the core; laid bare in its nakedness, it stands before us as vile animalism. Religious indifference is not, with one or two exceptions, so coarse or unashamed with us as in France; it does not openly enthrone lust. The great majority of our sceptical writers are argumentatively calm and serenely cold towards the uncompromising Christian faith, as if imbued with the spirit of the poet's lines :

Leave then thy sister, when she prays,
Her early heaven, her happy views ;
Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith through form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good ;
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine.

But what security have we that the leaders will continue as they are, or that they will be able to control the masses? There is always the danger of a rapid downward descent. The people of this country, *with their eyes open, but only then*, may be safely trusted to reject with disdain the dogma that all religions are equally false or useless. Our character is deeply religious. We have not begun to traverse the road which says that hatred of God is the beginning of wisdom. What Milton says of the Englishman is true also of us: 'The Englishman,' he says, 'of many other nations is least atheistical, and has a natural disposition of much reverence and awe towards the Deity.' National atheism, palatable to a few, will be abhorrent to the many. But familiarity with an ugly fact, under the specious name of religious equality, may make men first endure, then pity, then embrace what they began by hating.

It cannot be the meaning of the two great Presbyterian bodies in Scotland that are agitating for religious equality—that all religions, Mohammedan, Brahminical, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, are on an equality. I will not insult their intelligence by suggesting that Christianity is to be put by them on an equality with other religions. They believe, as well as we, that Christianity is the one absolute religion. They, as well as we, accept the farewell command of our Lord: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' They work, and give, and pray as well as we, for the coming of the world-wide kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor will I insult their sincerity by

saying that their attachment to Presbyterianism is fragile—that Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Congregationalism are equally well pleasing in their sight. They, as well as we, desire Presbyterianism, not any foreign manufacture, but our own religious home-growth, rooted in the soil of our country, to continue in its present exalted position, as best calculated to promote the religious interests of our nation. It may be said, likewise, of the minor Christian sects in the country, that there is no wavering as to the claims and mission of Christianity as the one absolute religion, and that their attachment to their own ecclesiastical views is distinct and decided. They are not prepared to surrender any of their convictions in order that all professing Christians in this land may see eye to eye, and stand on one platform of ecclesiastical government, worship, and discipline.

What, then, is meant by this cry of religious equality? It is, we are told, religious equality *among all professing Christians in the eye of the law*. But in the eye of the law all men, not merely all Christians, have already certain human rights in which they are on an equality. Their life, liberty, and property are preserved to all alike. No man suffers in this land from law because he is not a Christian. Our sovereign, indeed, as we have already pointed out, must be a Protestant. There are some mild Christian tests for certain offices in the government and in the universities. Otherwise there is no legal preference. No sect is ostracised. Undoubtedly the Church of Scotland is in a position of special legal strength. Her statutory courts

have an independence that no other church courts in Scotland possess. She is entitled to old ecclesiastical endowments. In this privileged position lies the only inequality in the eye of law among professing Christians. The practical result of the acceptance of the principle involved in the ambitious title of religious equality would be, not the equality of all creeds or negations of creeds in the eye of the law, but simply the *humiliation of the national Church* to the level of contending sects. It would not be the equality of all creeds or negations of creeds in the eye of the law; for below *religious equality among all professing Christians* there exists a stratum of society which, according to this principle, is not to be on the same platform, in the eye of the law, as professing Christians. There is a mysterious something which professing Christians will have, which the others will not have. All non-professing Christians are excluded from the platform. The irreducible minimum of faith required is what enables a man to say, from his own point of view, 'I profess to be a Christian.' If a man cannot say that, he would suffer as truly an injustice from this privileged position of Christianity as dissenters say they do now in view of the privileged superiority of the national Church. The injustice might be only negatively and by social stigma: still if there be injustice now, the same kind of injustice would continue then, though it be only against a smaller number. Why is not every shred of so-called injustice at once got rid of? Why is not the principle of religious equality carried out to its fullest extent? Why is it not made plain that an

atheist may be on the throne, that the Bible must be excluded from every government school, that the Christian law of marriage is not binding on non-Christians, and that the Christian Sabbath is only for those who choose to observe it? It is because Liberationists who are Christians are better than the principle by which at first they have been vaguely misled; because, in the interests of national well-being, they desire to prevent the introduction of heathen orgies and vile abominations on the one hand, and to recognise the Bible, monogamy, and the Christian Sabbath on the other, and they cannot accomplish that object without limiting their principle to religious equality *among professing Christians*; and because they know well that the country is not prepared to say that any religion or no religion will do as well for the stability and progress of this nation as Christianity. As Dr M'Crie says: 'The system which would equalise all kinds of religion in the eye of the law, which proclaims universal right and liberty in such matters, and deprives religion and its institutions of the countenance and support of human laws, though it has a specious and inviting appearance, contains in its bowels, like the Trojan horse, a host of evils, which issuing forth would spread devastation around, and soon lay the bulwarks and palaces of Christianity in the dust.'

Accordingly the principle is limited. And there can be no doubt that if all professing Christians in this land, looking more at the great verities on which the vast majority of them at all events are agreed, and less at the differences more or less

important which divide them, each seeking to sacrifice self the most, in order to honour and please the Great Head of all, were to combine not for selfish, partisan, or political purposes, but in normal necessity out of love to Christ, and desire for the nation's highest weal, they would constitute a comprehensive national Church, ennobling and purifying this land in a measure heretofore unexperienced. The Church of Scotland will welcome such a reconstruction on the old national lines, with the old national rights and privileges of the people's church, by the Christian people of this land. But if a scheme is put forth which must humiliate and irritate the existing establishment, which fixes the national level at those religious bodies that are now demanding equality, which, if it unhappily succeeded, would be accompanied by shouts of victory from those bodies, soon to be followed by the cry for the spoils of victory, in prestige and influence, throughout the land; then would ensue no time of love and charity and brotherly kindness, no time for the wise building up in peace and unity of a comprehensive national church; but a time of strife and narrowing sectarian zeal, a time in which churches would be managed as mercantile concerns, and the weak and poor would be dependent and pauperised, fed only by the crumbs that fall from the tables of the rich. Then, indeed, would ensue a time of grievous inequality, when the kingdom of heaven would be administered here as the kingdoms of this world, when class distinctions would be deepened into dangerous rigidity, when to him that hath of earth shall be given much of heaven, and

from him that hath not of earth shall be taken away what he hath of heaven.

The basis of the present hostile movement is founded on the plea of justice! What if we carry this war-cry into our opponents' territory? Are their proposals just to us? Justice is impartiality; it is rendering unto all their dues. I will not press the question, 'Is Christianity, as a factor in the government of this nation, to be put on an equality with Mohammedanism, Judaism, Mormonism, Secularism, Atheism'—though a more explicit utterance on this point in many quarters is much to be desired? But is it just to Presbyterianism, preferred by four-fifths of this nation, to be put on an equality with Congregationalism, backed up by the merest fraction? Is it just to dethrone the national Church from its place, and to dispossess it of its property, while it is doing its duty to the nation, never more so than at the present moment? It interferes with no rights of dissenters; it leaves them at perfect freedom; it overshadows them with a benignant influence which would be lost if it were swept away; it constitutes a standard which stimulates to rivalry and prevents oppression. All that it wants is to be let alone, to be allowed to follow its avocation, and to be protected in its rights. Is it just to molest and harass the Church in its holy calling? What it wants is that others should do to it as it is doing to them. It has been nobly true to its position; it has laboured to fulfil its obligations. It has stretched out the hand of conciliation, and invited those who have gone from it to become again a portion of it. It has dealt tenderly

with scruples, and is still waiting to deal tenderly, and the only answer is: 'We will not accept your gifts; we will not share your patrimony; but we want you stripped and desolate.' There is this extremity of harshness set before us, too. We are not only to be cast down from our privileged position as the Church of Scotland established by law; we are to be despoiled of all our endowments. We are not only to be levelled to their position as non-established; but we are to be placed below them. Their endowments are to remain in the case of the Free Church, amounting to a capital sum of £716,000; in the case of the United Presbyterian Church, to a capital sum of £126,000. But our endowments, except perhaps those gathered within the last generation, are to be taken from us and secularised. They have their churches and manses left; our first duty, after our downfall, would be to buy back church and manse in every parish—to do this, not gradually as they have done, but at once, without having undergone any training or preparation, lest the highest bidder forthwith snatch the chance away. It is difficult to conceive any considerable body of reasonable men lending themselves to such an unfair, unwise, and oppressive form of dealing with the greatest of Scottish institutions.



ST GILES' LECTURES.

SIXTH SERIES—THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

LECTURE VII.

DISESTABLISHMENT AND DISENDOWMENT; THEIR EFFECTS UPON THE PEOPLE.

By the Rev. JAMES MACGREGOR, D.D., Senior Minister of
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AS we look wearily out on the ecclesiastical condition of things in Scotland, the cry comes unbidden to our lips, 'How long, O Lord, how long!' That condition is one which ought to fill us all with sorrow and shame. For fifty years, with a passing lull from time to time, this land has been the theatre of religious war. There has been no true peace within our borders. This unhappy state of things has now reached an acute stage, and the cry for union is in the air. The mind of the nation is awakening to the melancholy spectacle which our broken Presbyterianism presents, and which makes us the laughing-stock of the Romanist on the one hand, and of the infidel on the other. The conscience of the nation is being

aroused to the sinful nature and ruinous results of our unhappy divisions. One in every essential element of church life, one in creed, in discipline and government, the three great Presbyterian bodies in the land possess 'a uniformity which Rome might have enjoined, and which Lambeth might envy.' It may fairly be questioned if, in the whole history of Christianity, there will be found another instance of three great churches so absolutely at one on all essential matters, which became separate and continued separate on grounds so small. It is no part of my business to inquire into the causes which have brought about this state of things, nor to apportion to this church or to that church the blame, which all alike must share. What I have to do is to speak the truth as I see it and have long seen it, and to say that it is a state of things which every Christian must deplore, and pray earnestly to God, in his good time and way, to bring to an end. It is discreditable to us, in every sense of the term. We have gentle and tender natures among us, tired of our endless squabbles, seeking peace in Episcopacy and even in Romanism; we have strong-minded and cultured natures, weary of the war of churches and sects, seeing uncharitableness, bitterness, and jealousy elevated into Christian virtues, seeking rest in scepticism; and between the two, the once strong fabric of Scottish Presbyterianism, torn by internal dissensions, seems to be losing, instead of gaining strength. To say that this state of things is incurable, is to insult our good sense and our Christian feeling.

Recent events have turned the attention of the

country, with peculiar intentness, to the ecclesiastical position, and there can be no doubt whatever of the existence of a deep, wide-spread, and ever-growing desire that our divided Presbyterian Church should again be one. For some time past this desire has been publicly expressed by influential members of the three Presbyterian Churches, and much attention has been given to a draft-bill prepared by Mr Finlay, the member of parliament for Inverness, which has been widely regarded by the public, and by the principal organs of the press, as in its general tenor at least a wise and well-considered measure for the removal of obstacles in the way of union. The proposals in this direction have touched the public mind as the cry for disestablishment never did. As a consequence of these proposals, there was recently held in Edinburgh a conference of above one hundred influential Free Church clergymen.¹ So far as the voice of these ministers can speak the mind of the church, the hope of a happier day for Scotland is as far off as ever. To the call for union there comes a strong and emphatic 'No!' For right across the path they place the impassable bar of disestablishment and disendowment, which will never be willingly accepted by the Church of Scotland, and can never be accomplished except through a process of extreme violence which would preclude the possibility of union for generations to come. But

¹ The report of that conference, held on 18th January, I read as I sat down to begin this lecture; and, although it could not be said to be in the least degree unexpected, in common with tens of thousands throughout the land, I read it with feelings of the greatest distress.

we are not to despair of reunion because the voice of so many Free Church ministers has practically gone against it; for we have been taught by recent events that the voice of the ministers is not the voice of the people. Nor are we to despair of it, because the leaders of the United Presbyterian Church have also made disestablishment the first essential step to reunion, and on that point seem, in the meantime, to be irreconcilable and immovable. This is a question which concerns the laity even more than the clergy; and it is for them to take the matter up, and with the help of God to conduct it to a successful issue. No such favourable opportunity for the peaceful solution of this great question is likely to occur again in the present generation.

The Church of Scotland, established and endowed with its precious privileges and glorious traditions, is the common and magnificent patrimony of the Scottish people. It will be the purpose of the following lecture to show what its disestablishment and disendowment mean, and what their probable effects upon the people of Scotland would be.

What, then, does disestablishment mean? In endeavouring to answer that question, I shall try as far as possible to minimise rather than to magnify the differences of opinion which prevail regarding it, on the part of those who are within and those who are without the Established Church. The hottest quarrels are unhappily quarrels between those who are nearest of kin, and often about words to which different meanings are attached. One would fain hope that it is so here. When we are told by men

of the highest authority, that 'they desire to see a reunion of true Scottish Presbyterians in one church, *national in its memories, its principles, and its influence,*' and who tell us in the same breath, that, 'as regards the way in which this great result is to be brought about, it must include disestablishment and disendowment;' when we are told by others that 'disestablishment does not involve the cancelling of the present statutes that recognise and support the Christian religion;' and by others still, that establishment is a mere sentiment, a mere 'shadow'—it is very difficult to believe that by these words they and we understand the same thing. It is quite necessary, therefore, to state plainly and frankly what, in our view of them, these words mean. They mean the destruction of the Church of Scotland. There is no use shutting our eyes to that plain and obvious fact. Were the Church disestablished and disendowed to-morrow, we should not cease to be Christians; we should not cease to be members of *a* church; but we should no longer be members of the ancient and historic Church of Scotland. It would be gone, and gone for ever. That which differentiates it from other Presbyterian churches in this land, in the colonies, and in the United States of America—its State connection, its national character, and its ancient provision—would cease to be. An essential element which the Reformation preserved intact, and which has come down from immemorial time, would be destroyed.

Disestablishment means the severance of the tie which binds Church and State, and that again means the denationalisation of both.

That State connection goes back unbroken through all the changes of nearly a thousand years. We can point to no definite period of time when that connection began. Long before any formal legislative act bound them together, the Church and the nation grew up as two fair sisters, side by side. The Church was simply the nation in its religious aspect. It is a common assertion in these days that the State selected a particular church as the object of its special favour; entered into a formal alliance with it, and enriched it with endowments. It is even asserted that 'an Established Church, so far as its revenue is concerned, is a department of State finance.' It has been abundantly shown in previous lectures that that statement is false in history and in fact.

The formal and legislative connection between Church and State in Scotland, began at the Reformation in 1560. But that formal connection, strictly speaking, cannot be called 'establishment.' That word, though popularly convenient, is historically and scientifically inaccurate. As regards the change which then took place in the Church's creed and constitution, all that the Scottish Parliament had to do was simply to accept and ratify it. The State connection was not the gift of Parliament; it sprang simply and solely from the people's will. To an extent which probably holds true of no other, the Church of Scotland, all through its chequered history, has been what it is to-day—the Church of the people. Through its General Assemblies, far more than through its parliament, was the voice of the nation heard. The history of

the one has been the history of the other. It was the people who, in 1560, reformed it from popery. It was the people who, in 1592 and in 1690, reformed it from prelacy. It was the people who in times of danger defended its liberties with their lives. It was, and is, the people who govern it, and who have in their hands the management of its affairs; and it is in the hands of the people that its destinies lie.

On these ancient constitutional statutes of 1560, 1592, and 1690, which are still in force, the existing Church of Scotland rests; and to erase them from the statute-book would be to erase the most glorious chapters in our national history. We value them as the records of the people's splendid struggles, and as the legislative expression of the people's victorious will.

In 1560 the Confession of Faith drawn up by John Knox and others, as representing the Reformed Church, was ratified by the estates of parliament, and in 1567 received the royal sanction, when the Reformed Church was declared to be 'the only true and holy Kirk of Jesus Christ within this realm.' It was also statute and ordained that all future sovereigns at their coronation 'shall make promise by oath, in the presence of the eternal God, that during the whole course of their lives, they shall serve the same eternal God to the uttermost of their power . . . and shall maintain the religion of Christ Jesus, now received and preached within this realm.' The great act of 1592, known as the Church's Magna Charta, conferred nothing new, as its very title plainly shows, 'Ratification of the

Liberty of the True Kirk.' In the same way the great act of 1690 was entitled, 'Act *ratifying* the Confession of Faith, and *settling* Presbyterian government.' It gave nothing new. It merely *ratified* what already existed, and *settled* the Presbyterian Church on its present basis, as 'being agreeable to the word of God, and most conducive to the advancement of true piety and godliness, and establishing of peace and tranquillity within this realm.'

The Act of Queen Anne, by which the union of the kingdoms was effected, was preceded by an act of the Scottish Parliament. In that act it is provided (1707, c. 6) that the commissioners appointed to arrange the terms and articles of union 'should not treat of or concerning any alteration of the worship, discipline, and government of the Church of this kingdom *as now by law established.*' It was further enacted that the Church as thus settled was 'to continue without any alteration to the people of this land in all succeeding generations,' and 'that this act of parliament, with the establishment therein contained, shall be held and observed in all time coming, as a fundamental and essential condition of any Treaty of Union to be concluded between the two kingdoms, without any alteration thereof or derogation thereto, in any sort for ever.' These solemn words may be said to be the last uttered by Scotland as an independent nation. As a further security, it was enacted that the first oath the British sovereign should take on his accession, and prior to his coronation, should be an oath to maintain 'the government, worship, discipline,

rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland.¹ That act of the Scottish Parliament was 'for ever ratified, approved, and confirmed' by the Imperial Parliament (5 Anne, c. 8). The care bestowed on the protection of the Church by that parliament, composed of fifty Scotch and five hundred English and Irish members, was extreme. It was to carry out the negotiations securely that Principal Carstares was twice successively elected moderator of the General Assembly. The treaty, when it did come, was made with Scotland as a foreign power, and was then ratified by the Scottish Parliament as such. These statutes are still in force, and these are the statutes on which the Church of Scotland rests. 'These acts are not ordinary legal statutes, but they touch matters of high and holy interest. They are the homage which the kings of the earth have paid to the King of kings, the deeds of nations acknowledging the truth of the living God—of men really bulwarks in the exercise of the authority which God has given to princes to fortify and protect the authority which He has committed to his Church.' In the General Assembly of 1842,

¹ The following is the oath as taken by the Queen: 'I, Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, do faithfully promise and swear that I shall inviolably maintain and preserve the settlement of the true Protestant religion, with the government, worship and discipline, rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland, *as established by the laws made there in preservation of the Claim of Rights, and particularly by an Act entitled "An Act for securing the Protestant religion and Presbyterian church government,"* and the Acts passed in the parliaments of both kingdoms for union of the two kingdoms. So help me God. VICTORIA R.' On the 20th June in the year of our Lord 1837, Her Majesty's court at Kensington, Her Majesty in the first general Council.

Mr Alexander Dunlop used these weighty words regarding them.

These are the statutes in virtue of which the Church of Scotland is to-day an 'essential, fundamental, and unalterable' part of the British constitution, its creed the law, and its courts, courts of the realm. Only by an act of parliament, and with the consent of the Scottish people, as a party to the Treaty, can the Church of Scotland be severed from the British State, and the Confession of Faith, and the Presbyterian church government and discipline, cease to be the law of the land. The act of parliament which accomplished that would *ipso facto* repeal the great act of 1690 and those other acts of 1592 and 1560 on which it rests. These statutes disestablishment would repeal, and repealing, would erase all recognition of God and of religion through the medium of a Christian Church, from the ancient laws and constitution of Scotland, as effectually as they are obliterated from the constitution of the United States. Before a British constitution could be made, or a British parliament could legislate, or a British ruler sit upon the throne, the religious rights and liberties which our reforming and covenanting forefathers won at great cost of suffering and blood, had to be unalterably secured to their descendants for ever. We entered upon the union as a free and a foreign nation, with our drums beating and our flags flying—a nation which, through seven hundred years, England had tried hard to conquer, and had tried in vain. To disestablish the Church is to alter the British constitution, and to tear the treaty of union in pieces, for it is to repeal

by far its most solemn and important article, the article which above all others was specially safeguarded. That is a task which it is not competent for the British parliament to accomplish, except on the distinct and deliberate demand of the Scottish people. They are the descendants and the representatives of those who made that treaty; they were one of the high contracting parties, and it cannot be broken without their consent. They can do it, England as the other contracting party consenting thereunto. But as a pious and patriotic people, justly proud of what their fathers did, they will think twice before they break so utterly with the past, destroy the historical continuity of their Church, rewrite the history of their country, and 'undo the work of three hundred years.'

Such a step would not only thoroughly denationalise their Church; it would complete a process which has been long going on, it would denationalise their country. The late Dean Stanley somewhere said that no church on earth holds its annual convocation amid circumstances of greater pomp and ceremonial than the Church of Scotland. I can understand neither the head nor the heart of the Scotchman, to whatever church he belongs, who could wish that stately procession of the Queen's representative, the Lord High Commissioner, from Holyrood to St Giles at the annual opening of the General Assembly, swept for ever away. It is the one imposing spectacle which links the present to the past, and which pictures to our eye the time when we had a king and a kingdom of our own. Much of the distinctiveness of our Scottish life is

passing, and along with it, alas! much of its picturesque and charm. Our native Doric is fast dying. Destroy the Church, our most ancient, our most characteristic, and our stateliest institution, which, more than all other forces put together, has made our country what it is, and how very little that is distinctively Scottish will remain!

But disestablishment means much more, and much worse than the denationalising of the Church and State; it means the dechristianising of the State. It means the destruction of national religion, and the dethronement of the Lord Jesus Christ as king and head of this land. All this is involved, as we have just seen, in the complete effacement from the statute-book of those great statutes which for three hundred years have declared the Scottish nation to be a distinctly Christian and Protestant nation. Every future sovereign of this realm would be relieved from the oath by which, through all these years, our rulers have been taken bound to uphold the Protestant faith. It would therefore be a gigantic act of national apostasy; and its effects upon the people would be such as, in the righteous and unfailing retribution of God, must always follow a great national sin. Our Voluntary brethren have plainly spoken out their mind from their point of view. We must do the same from ours. In regard to this matter, I can speak only for myself, but when I do so, I believe that I express the convictions of the large majority of my countrymen, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Roman Catholic. We hold it as a fundamental, essential, and everlasting principle, that it is the right and duty

of nations, *in their national capacity*, to honour Almighty God and his Son Jesus Christ, and to the utmost of their power to support, defend, and further his cause and kingdom on the earth. To break the connection between Church and State is to destroy the nation's testimony to its faith in God, and its homage to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the words of the protest laid on the table of the General Assembly by Dr Welsh in 1843, we 'firmly assert the right and duty of the civil magistrate to maintain and support an establishment of religion.'

That is the great principle on which we take our stand, and from which we cannot swerve. We should hold it as firmly and proclaim it as fully as we now do, if we were disestablished to-morrow; and should work and pray for the time when it would be reasserted in this land. It was a principle strongly, and even passionately held by our great Reformers, and has come down to us unchallenged until quite recent years.

Voluntaryism is the denial of that principle. It authoritatively asserts that 'the Church is exclusively the institution of Christ . . . whereas the State is specifically an ordinance of man.'¹ It holds that 'it is not competent to the civil magistrate to give legislative sanction to any creed in the way of setting up civil establishment of religion; and that it is not within his province to provide for the expenses of the ministrations of the Church out of the national resources.'² 'It protests

¹ Manual of Distinctive Principles.

² Doctrine of United Presbyterian Church, as declared during negotiations for union.

against all civil establishment, endowment, or subsidy of religious bodies ;' and in words which, so far as I know, were never heard in this land till about sixty years ago, it regards 'the system as unscriptural, impious, and unjust.' But the system of which this is said, is precisely the system which has prevailed in this land since the Reformation, and for ages before it ; and since that which is unscriptural and unjust now, must have always been so, these hard words are applicable to the Church which Knox founded, which Melville reformed, which Carstares restored, although happily these illustrious men did not live to know it.

We have no fault whatever to find with Voluntaries for holding these views. This is a free country, and they have a perfect right to hold their opinions, and to propagate them to the utmost of their power by the only means which it is competent for them to use—namely, persuasion and conviction. But they must allow us, also, to hold ours. We deny their right on their own principles to call in the aid of the civil arm to prevent the majority of the people of Scotland from carrying out their most cherished convictions. As strongly as they hold their views which they have elevated into principles, and which they have endowed with the promise of the future, we as strongly disown them. We cannot forget, nor should they, that it took the world a long time to discover that establishments are 'unscriptural' and 'unlawful,' and that not only our own Church, but the whole Church of God throughout the world, was hopelessly astray until the flames of the French revolution

threw a new and a lurid light upon the subject. This entirely novel doctrine is no older than the century. Previous to that time, it was never heard of among the dissenters of England or Scotland. On the other hand, men like Owen and Flavel and Doddridge and Matthew Henry spoke strongly in favour of establishments; as did Chalmers and Cunninghame and Buchanan and Begg among ourselves. Dr Peddie in 1800 A.D., said, 'The Associate Synod will admit that legal establishments are lawful and warrantable.' In the testimony of the United Secession Synod published in 1831, it is stated that 'religion, abstractly viewed, is essential to the well-being of society, and to the efficient exercise of civil government, and is therefore the concern of legislators and civil rulers, as well as of all others in their several situations.' It was stated in a previous lecture that the very name 'Voluntaryism' is a new word, and was coined by a minister still living in Edinburgh. If the statement is true, as no doubt it is, it is one well worth remembering. The doctrine of Voluntaryism, as firmly held, and incisively expressed by more than one able and excellent man in this land, might, with advantage, behave itself in a less imperious manner towards the older and more venerable doctrine of establishment. For every hundred who have held the one, there have been millions who have held the other. But the young doctrine is bold; and with the elder it holds no truce, makes no concession, offers no conciliation, and holds out no hope of living in peace under the shelter of the same kindly roof. As to it, its destiny is to shape the course

of future events. As to the other—*Delenda est Carthago*.

On which side the ultimate victory will lie, time alone will tell. What is certain is, that there are few questions which more nearly and vitally affect the well-being of the people. The voluntary principle, as we see it, rests upon a fundamental and a mischievous fallacy, which sooner or later must be fatal to it. That fallacy is this, that the civil and religious affairs of a nation can be sharply separated from one another. It is a fallacy on the face of it. You can no more divorce the spiritual and the civil in human affairs, than you can separate a body and a soul. They touch and cross each other at a thousand points. In the Jewish theocracy Church and State were one ; in the ideal Church of the future, as held out to us in the New Testament, they will be one again. The sharp distinction between Church and State, which is the very essence of Voluntaryism, finds no support in the Old Testament, and the sharp distinction between the secular and the sacred finds no support in the New. Is not the highest of all possible dreams for our poor planet a condition where there will be no secular and sacred, but where priest and people shall be one ?

Intimately allied with this is another fundamental fallacy as to the nature of the State. The State is not a congeries of separate, unconnected persons, like pebbles on the shore, with no relation save that of proximity. It is not, any more than the family, a fortuitous concourse of men and women : it is a united and living whole ; ‘an organism with a unity of existence distinct from

all others and from the individuals of which it is composed.' It is a living thing; it is born, it acts, it enjoys, it suffers; it is healthy, it is diseased; it grows, it decays; it dies. As with the living body, so with the living State; if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. The individuality of a separate life attaches to it; and each nation has an individuality, and a character, and a life of its own. The German, the French, the Italian, the Spanish nations, the vast conglomerate of the United States, each has its own individual life, its distinguishing features and characteristics marking it sharply off from all others. This organic life of the State is not accidental; it is essential. It is not merely a human institution, it is a divine ordinance, that the members of a nation, like the members of a household, shall have this corporate existence, the one as a family, the other as a state; and it is no more possible to say that, while the individual members of the State shall honour God, the State itself need not do so, than it is to say that the members of the family shall honour God, but the family itself need not do so. Religion has just as much to do with the functions of the State as with the functions of the family.

In this organic and corporate life, which essentially, and by God's ordinance, belongs to it, the State has functions, duties, obligations, rights, and responsibilities which it expresses and discharges through the government and legislature. It forms treaties, engages in war, enacts laws, represses crime. It has to do with every element and with every

force which is a factor in the national welfare, and certainly not least with religion, which is the mightiest force of all. It is not like a gigantic school-board, or prison-board, or board of trade having special features and phases of the national life to deal with. It is the expression and the exponent of the national life as a whole, and of all the innumerable elements of which it is constituted. In a sense different from that which applies to the separate individuals who compose it, the State is the subject of the providential government; it is accountable to God; it is by Him rewarded and punished. They have an hereafter; it has not. Whatever its rewards and punishments, these are received and exhausted here. When they come, they fall upon the body corporate. They have no regard to separate persons. They make no distinction between the good and the bad. It is the nation as a nation that is dealt with. The evil share with the good in the blessing, the good with the evil in the curse. How large a portion of the Old Testament is occupied with God's dealings with nations outside the chosen people in the way of rewards and punishments! The whole history of the world bears attestation to a moral order and to a moral governor among nations, as distinguished from the individuals who compose them.

But if God bears this relation to nations as such, do not nations, as such, bear a corresponding relation to him? If He sends blessings upon nations as such, are they not bound, in their national capacity, to recognise and honour the source from which their blessings flow? Shall the individual

living being be bound to pay acts of homage to this bountiful benefactor, and shall not the corporate living being be bound to do the same? The inevitable conclusion is that expressed by Mr Gladstone: 'A nation then, having a personality, lies under the obligation, like the individuals composing its governing body, of sanctifying the acts of that personality by the offices of religion, and thus we have a new and imperative ground for the existence of "State religion."' ¹

There is more to be said. It so happens that the nation to which we belong, in its organic life, is Christian. That is its very greatest element and characteristic. An infidel or an atheist could not sit upon its throne. Its structure is Christian. The vast mass of its people are Christian. Its laws, its customs, its institutions are Christian. The forces which have shaped its history, and which have produced and perpetuated its prosperity, are Christian. It is there that its strength and greatness lie.

As there may be sores on an otherwise healthy body, so upon the body politic there may be such gangrenes as infidelity and atheism. These, however, are not its strength, but its weakness. It is strong and healthy, not because of them, but in spite of them. If they were to obtain the mastery, the organic life of the nation would be either changed or die. It is not only the right, but the bounden duty of a State so organically constituted as ours, in its corporate and State capacity, to acknowledge, reverence, and obey the

¹ *The State—its Relation with the Church*, by W. E. Gladstone, M.P., 1839.

Lord Jesus as its chosen and covenanted King and Head. But if this be so, the unanswerable question comes to be, as Dr Buchanan put it in 1835 : ‘How can a kingdom or nation, as such, serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but by professing its allegiance to him through the medium of its legislature and laws, the only channel through which the minds of the people in their collective capacity can be expressed?’ and how, we may add, can that allegiance be expressed except through the legislative recognition of the Christian religion and of a Christian Church?

It is on this fundamental and central truth that this nation, in its organic and corporate life, is essentially a Christian nation, and, so far as Scotland is concerned, essentially a Presbyterian nation, that the doctrine of a Presbyterian establishment rests. It is one of the fundamental fallacies, and one of the most mischievous errors of Voluntaryism, that this great central truth is practically ignored or denied. The false principle that ‘the State, in its State capacity, is a sceptic and has no creed,’ has been pronounced to be ‘the root and justification of Voluntaryism, and the true meaning of it.’

There is no *via media*, no resting-place between the conception of the State as sceptic, and the conception of the State as, in some form or other, allied with religion and a church, which is simply religion embodied and organised. However many turns you may take, and however much ingenuity you may expend, the Voluntary principle, carried to its logical issue, leads straight up to this, that the State as a state knows no God and no religion, has no religious character and no religious responsibility.

It has been held to be the very glory of the constitution of the United States that the name of God is never once mentioned in it, and that you could not tell, after the most careful perusal, whether it was drawn up for a Christian or a Mohammedan people. It has been said that 'the relation of civil government to Christianity in this country really consists *in having no relation at all*. This is the American doctrine; and if there be any departure therefrom in specific instances, it is so by a plain inconsistency with the doctrine itself, which time will remove rather than confirm and perpetuate.' That is the clear and consistent statement of the principle of so-called 'religious equality,' 'a fair field and no favour,' and 'even-handed justice to all.' But both there and here, men are better than their principles, and shrink from carrying them clearly and sternly to their logical issues. So great are the evils involved in, and arising from, this sceptic conception of the State, that an association numbering some of the leading names in America, was formed some years ago for the purpose of 'securing such amendments to the constitution of the United States as will suitably express our *national recognition of Almighty God*, as the author of national existence, and the source of all power and authority in civil government, and of Jesus Christ as the ruler of nations, and of the Bible as the fountainhead of law, and the supreme rule for the conduct of nations.' That is a noble aspiration, but it is a manifest tampering with the principle that the State is a sceptic; and the principle is worthless which you cannot carry through, and which, in order to

meet difficulties, you are obliged to modify at every turn.

Here, too, in this land the most uncompromising advocates of Voluntaryism, men who could find no room in a reconstructed church for those who differ from them, are much better than their principles; for while declaring on the one hand that 'the magistrate has no right of control in the things of religion, or within the domain of conscience,' they declare on the other that he 'ought to further the interests of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ among his subjects in every way consistent with its spirit and enactments, and that he ought to be ruled by it in the making of laws, the administration of justice, the swearing of oaths, and other matters of civil jurisdiction.' These excellent principles, which came out in the negotiations for union between the Free and the United Presbyterian Church, are not Voluntary principles, but manifest departures from them, and were accordingly, we understand, repudiated by the more thoroughgoing Voluntaries. While we cannot but attach, and justly attach, great weight to the interpretations which able and excellent men have put upon their own principles, it is not with their interpretations, but with the principles themselves, that we have to do. And what we contend is, that the only legitimate and logical issue of Voluntaryism, pure and simple, and as authoritatively defined, is not national religion, but national scepticism.

The victory of Voluntaryism will be the overthrow of establishment. It is our duty to indicate what, from our point of view, the effect upon the

people will be. The direct and inevitable result will be the expulsion of religion from our public schools. The day that sees the Church and the State divorced, will see religion and education divorced. With happy and human inconsistency, the most uncompromising opponents of a State-paid religion to grown-up people in the national Church have been the warmest defenders of State-paid religion to their little children in the national school. That is a position which cannot long be maintained; and already the cry to abandon it has gone loudly forth. To its national Church and its *religious* national schools, Scotland owes all in it that is best. There the moral and intellectual fibre of the people was formed. Through long ages they have been her glory and strength: when she throws away the one, she will have thrown away the other; and the effects upon the national character, in the course of a few generations, of an education given to our youth from which the religious element has been, as far as possible, eliminated, will be disastrous beyond all human measurement. It will be a calamity whose ruinous and far-reaching results future generations will bitterly deplore. At that parting of the ways between the old and the new, there may well be a signpost with the words: 'Here, in its system of godless schools, our country entered on the road to ruin.' To those who are at all acquainted with the formidable forces which in this land, and in this day, are working for infidelity, and to an extent far beyond what is generally known, are poisoning the minds of our youth of both sexes, the disestablishment of a national Church,

and the expulsion of religion from our public schools, must seem little short of an act of national insanity. This will be a long stride in the direction of national scepticism.¹

And along with the expulsion of religion from State-endowed schools, there will follow in due time, unless we are happily inconsistent, its expulsion from all State-paid institutions whatsoever. The State will have no right to appoint chaplains to the navy and the army, and to invite or compel our sailors and soldiers to attend divine service. Religion, with its hallowed teaching and soothing offices, must be denied to the dying in our State-supported poorhouses and hospitals. Our marriage laws, and our Lord's Day, must be deprived of all religious sanction. Oaths of office must be universally abolished. Parliament must no longer be opened with prayer, and the reverent invocation of the blessing of God upon its members and their deliberations, must no longer find a place in the speech from the throne. When, in the discharge of that most solemn duty which it falls to a human being to perform, the judge puts on the black cap and pronounces the awful sentence of death, there must be no intrusion on the domain of his poor fellow-creature's conscience, no entreaty to occupy his remaining time in making his peace with God, and no prayer for God

¹ 'The present generation,' says Professor Flint in *Anti-Theistic Theories*, 'and especially the generation which is growing up, will be obviously very specially exposed to the dangers of materialism. As much so, perhaps, as any generation in the history of the world. . . . Atheistical materialism may at no distant date, unless earnestly and wisely opposed, be strong enough to undertake to alter all our institutions, and to abolish those which it dislikes.'

to have mercy on his soul. Let us hope and believe that in this Christian land it will never come to that ; but let us at the same time wisely abstain from any measures which have even the remotest semblance of pointing in that direction.

There are thoughtful men within the Free Church itself, who 'detect in the cry for disestablishment that atheistic spirit which is at this day diffused as a miasma all over Europe.' If we turn our eyes to France, the land where a century ago Voluntaryism was born, we find that 'the Revolution delights in calling itself atheistic,' and that a desperate effort is being made by the Republican government to 'sever the tie, not between the State and this or that Christian church, but between the State and Christianity.' It is Frenchmen themselves who tell us that 'the democracy has abolished God,' that a perfidious war is being waged against religion altogether, and that 'the name of God has been proscribed from the school and from the hospital.'¹

If the direct effect of the victory of Voluntaryism will be the legislative divorce of religion from national education, the indirect and only somewhat less disastrous effect will be the divorce of religion from the nation's political life. A generation which has been trained to believe that the State has nothing to do with religion, will not be slow in coming to believe that religion has nothing to do with the State. We have got much too long a way in that direction already. More and more religion

¹ 'Others,' says M. Paul Bert, 'may occupy themselves, if they will, in seeking a nostrum to destroy the phylloxera ; be it mine to find one that shall destroy the Christian religion.'

is being relegated to the conscience and the closet. It is passing into a maxim that a man's religion has nothing to do with his politics. This, which to some seems a self-evident truth, has only to be looked at to be seen to be the hollowest of all hollow sophistries, a vile and venomous lie. You cannot separate the beneficent forces of religion from the wide realm of politics without doing serious injury to both. A false principle like that prevalent among a people, is a fatal poison. We may well put to-day the question of Augustine: 'Will any one in his right wits say unto kings, It doth not concern you who shall be religious, or who shall be sacrilegious?' It is taught in the United States that 'Christianity has as little to do with the law, and the law with Christianity, as possible; that electors have nothing to do with men's religious sentiments . . . and that religion is nothing at an election.' The result, in the words of one of its greatest and wisest men, is 'that portentous, ever-increasing political corruption which already perplexes and appals the nation.' Shall we, in any shape or form, foster among ourselves principles which are followed by such demoralising effects? To lower in any way, and to any, even the smallest degree, that high standard of political purity which has hitherto characterised our public men, and which has formed a happy contrast between our own public life and that of some other nations, would be a colossal crime. It would help to demoralise the nation, to undermine the foundations of our empire, and to pollute the fountains of our political and social life. To teach a Christian people directly by word, or indirectly by

a false system, that they have nothing to do with the religious character and sentiments of the men who represent them in parliament, who make the laws which will govern them and their children, and who hold in their hands the destinies of this great empire, is to teach a pernicious error.

It is because we fear that a victorious Voluntaryism *might* tend in this direction, that we so greatly dread it. Kept in a subordinate place, it may be useful to the community by giving prominence to certain aspects of truth which are liable to be forgotten ; but raised to supremacy in the Church of this land, it would, we humbly fear, be an unconscious and unintentional, but nevertheless a powerful and perpetual propagator of the false and fatal principle that religion and politics must be kept apart.

Such is the light in which, at a grave crisis, we look at this grave question. On what we conceive to be the strong and sure ground of national religion, and of a Christian State, by the help of God, we take our stand. Our Bibles, as we read them, and as our fathers read them before us, our history, our principles, the memory of our mighty dead, forbid us to consent to an act of disestablishment. If the great and solemn trust which has come down to us from our fathers, is to be taken from us, it must be torn from us by violence. For no consideration whatever, and from dread of no consequences whatever, can we voluntarily consent to give up a vital principle which we find imbedded in the Word of God, which was passionately held by our great Reformers, and through

all the change and turmoil of our ecclesiastical history has never been assailed until quite recent years, and whose maintenance we conceive to be essential to the highest and holiest interests of our native land.

We now turn to the simpler and smaller question of disendowment.

The ancient endowments of the Church from all sources may be roughly stated as amounting to three hundred thousand pounds a year.¹ This annual sum may be briefly called the patrimonial property of the Church, held in trust for the maintenance of religion, and for the free administration of religious ordinances throughout the land. In dealing with this property, it is important to keep certain elementary facts clearly in mind. (1) It is but a small part of the much larger property which belonged to the Church at the Reformation, and of which it was despoiled by the great landowners. (2) The teinds from which the endowments come are in no sense whatever a tax upon the land. 'They have always been a separate estate. . . . They are a heritable property capable of being bought and sold, but always under burden of the stipend of

¹ The total revenue from teinds in 1875 was £235,759; Exchequer grants—which are in reality partial payments out of the old bishops' rents, and which were Church property taken possession of by the Crown, £16,300; burgh and other local funds arising from appropriated Church lands, &c., £23,502. These sums may be raised to £330,372, by including three other items—namely, communion elements, £5395; annual value of manses, £24,733, and annual value of glebes, £24,681. Unexhausted teinds amount to £134,143, which, valued and commuted, might bring a capital sum of £20,000. The annual voluntary income of the Church, for Church work in 1883, was £377,723.—*Handbook of Church of Scotland*.

the parish minister.'¹ (3) We can point back to no definite period of time when these endowments began. Without doubt they came to some, perhaps to a large, extent from the Culdees, who resembled Presbyterians more nearly than Roman Catholics. There is no property in this land which is held by so old and so sacred a title. (4) These endowments are in no true sense the property of the State. They were neither created nor conferred by Parliament. The Government has from time to time recognised the change in the form of government of the church which used them, but it has never interfered with their application to religious uses. They are not, therefore, strictly speaking *national*, except in the sense in which all property, and especially all ancient endowments, may be said to be national. (5) They are more strictly speaking, *parochial*, having been originally given, and subsequently employed on the ancient principle, *decimæ debentur parochio*. They were primarily and mainly the voluntary contributions of private individuals for the maintenance of religious ordinances, and for pious purposes within the limits of a distinctly defined parish, and to this day the 'teinds are applied to a large extent to the stipends of the parishes from which they are drawn.' In no respect, therefore, except in the element of time, do they differ from the endowments of the *quoad sacra* parishes of the present day. Both were voluntary gifts; both were given for religious purposes; in both cases these purposes were to be secured through a special church or religious organisation,

¹ Nenion Elliot, S.S.C., Clerk to the Court of Teinds.

and within the limits of a defined territory. Supposing, therefore, we admit that these endowments are national property, they are national property *for distinctly religious purposes*. They are precisely on the same footing as any other ancient or modern endowments. The legislature may step in and re-arrange them, as it recently did with our great educational endowments ; but it would be a distinct violation of the laws of right and wrong, to divert them altogether from the design of their original donors, unless they were useless or mischievous in their operation. (6) For close on two hundred years they have been the unbroken possession of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, which has faithfully employed them for the purpose for which they were given, and in so doing has promoted the highest and the best interests of the land. Where is the property in this land which is held by a more valid title in law or in equity, or whose owner, past or present, can give a cleaner account of service done to the people and the state? (7) These endowments we regard as the common heritage or patrimony of Scottish Presbyterians, both of those who are in possession, and of those who have, we trust, temporarily, precluded themselves from the enjoyment of their benefits. It is a trust held by its present owners, not for their own selfish ends, but for the good of the people, and especially of the poor of the land, and in the interests of posterity.

What are we to do with this Scottish Church property of £300,000 a year? That at this moment is a matter of high dispute. There are three answers to that question : (1) The continuance of the present

system. (2) Re-arrangement and more equitable distribution among all Presbyterians through a reunited church. (3) Disendowment with or without the consent of the present owners. Of these three plans let us pass by the first. The second, redistribution over the whole area of Scottish Presbyterianism to all who will accept, will, we trust and believe, approve itself to the people of this land as by far the wisest and the best. It does not fall within the province of this lecture to enter in any detail into the precise method by which this may be effected. But with regard to the plan itself, there is this to be said, that there is no other possible way in which these endowments can be employed more in keeping with their immemorial usage and original design, more for the benefit and less for the injury of the nation, and more in conformity with the principles of equity and justice, than in the maintenance of religious ordinances in a great national Presbyterian Church, embracing within its folds some eighty-five per cent. of the entire population. It is quite true that it does not take into account the remaining fifteen per cent., including Episcopalians, Independents, Roman Catholics, and others. If that is a hardship, it is a hardship of the slightest kind, for it is only leaving out those who for two hundred years were never in. It must be remembered, on the one hand, that imperfection attaches to all human arrangements, and that, when dealing with an actual and not an ideal state of things, we must accept that arrangement which, on the whole, is the best; and it must be remembered, on the other hand, that in the manifold benefits which

would accrue to the nation from a great national Church, every citizen would be a participant, to whatever denomination he belonged, or even if he belonged to no denomination at all.

If there is any truth in the observations which have just been made, it is difficult to see what and where the insuperable obstacle can be to prevent a voluntary from adopting such a plan, and from becoming a member of a church in which such endowments are so employed; for these endowments, as we have seen, were purely voluntary gifts. Side by side with them there would, in a united church, be the amplest scope for the great voluntary principle that Christian churches are to regard provision for the support of their ministers as part of their Christian duty. In Canada, where our three churches at home had their exact counterpart, the endowments of one of them formed no barrier to union, *although, as is not the case here, these endowments came directly from the State.* In regard to the colonial clergy reserves, the two eminent leaders of the United Presbyterian Church recently said: 'We believe that they stood upon an entirely different footing from the national endowments of this country. But we feel that on our own ground, even had the case been parallel, the objections greatly outweigh any such example, and it is our belief that the mass of United Presbyterians would not only decline such an arrangement, but, if it were earnestly attempted, would oppose it.'¹ As to the first of these statements, there can be no higher authority than one of the ablest men in Canada, who took a

¹ Letter from Dr Cairns and Dr Ker, *Scotsman*, Jan. 23, 1886.

foremost part in effecting the union of the Canadian churches, Principal Grant of Queen's College, Kingston. This is what he says in a letter to the writer, of date 3d February 1883 :

'It seems to me that the union of the three great Presbyterian churches in Canada proves that a similar union ought to be effected in Scotland on the basis of each church contributing to the united Church all the special privileges and possessions that it now has. We had in Canada United Presbyterian ministers and people, and Free Church ministers and people, who disliked the idea of a church having a university, or having endowments, that had been originally given by the State ; yet they never dreamed of saying to us : " You must give up your university and your endowments before we can unite with you." Not only so, but they were willing that, wherever life interests were satisfied, the united Church should get the benefit of these endowments, *the only sorrow, I am sure, being that the total amount was not greater.* We had here all the varieties of opinion that you have in Scotland, and though your public endowments and recognition by the State are of a different character, the principle of your public endowments and ours is the same. We got ours because we were " in connection with the Church of Scotland," and we got them in the form of moneys that accrued to the State from public lands. If it is wrong to share in these on one side of the Atlantic, it must be equally wrong on the other. The advantages outweighed with all but a few cranks on both sides, mere prejudices and " fancy " objections.'

With regard to the second statement of the voluntary leaders, I have only to say that where there is so loud and so clear a call, in the providence of God, as there is to-day for Scottish Presbyterians to embrace, where interests of such enormous magnitude are imperilled by our divisions, where there is so little to sever and so much to unite, it will be the saddest of all sad things to see the

gladdening hope of a reconstructed Church wrecked for ever, if that were possible, by the immovable determination of a few excellent men, that what was done on the one side of the Atlantic shall not be done on the other, and that our ancient endowments must be secularised.

That is what the third plan of dealing with the endowments comes to. Disendowment means the secularisation of the Church funds, their alienation from religious uses, at a time and in circumstances in which they are more needed than they ever were. It practically means the sweeping away of the present parochial and territorial system, the best ever devised for supplying the spiritual wants of a country. It is the aim and object of that system to map out the land, both in town and country, into parishes of manageable extent, and to provide these parishes with a fully-equipped ecclesiastical organisation. It aims not merely to supply adequate church accommodation and religious ordinances for the whole body of the people, but, what is of still greater importance, to secure the pastoral superintendence of every home. It is by the loving, personal intercourse of soul with soul, by the regular and kindly visitation of the haunts of poverty, misery, and crime, by carrying the comforts and hopes of religion to the homes of the weary and the heavy-laden—it is by this method and by this alone that the lapsed masses can be reclaimed, and empty churches filled. We may cry for ever from the high places of the field, and cry in vain. The most powerful utterances of the pulpit are not loud enough to penetrate the dingy slums where so

many of our deserving as well as our depraved poor are housed. Nothing but the preaching of kindly and loving intercourse will ever penetrate there. This is a work of the most pressing kind which the haphazard efforts of Voluntaryism can never adequately accomplish. Although the territorial system, mainly through our divisions, has in our large towns been to a great extent a failure, it is only by the more effective carrying out of that system that the work can ever be done. Far short though it may have come of it, the aim and ideal of an Established Church are, through the division and multiplication of its parishes, to secure that there shall be no portion of the area of the soil of Scotland, no matter how densely peopled, for the spiritual welfare of whose inhabitants there shall not be adequate provision. It has sought, and still seeks, to provide a machinery whereby the benign influences of the gospel, and God's great message of mercy and love, shall be brought to every door throughout the land ; to secure that in every parish there shall be a church where the living shall be free to worship, and a churchyard where the dead shall be free to lie where their fathers were laid before them, and where their children shall be gathered beside them when their day's work is done ; to provide an educated gentleman specially trained and decently supported, without burdening his people, whose one work in life shall be to conduct the service of the sanctuary from week to week, and to carry the ministrations of religion from door to door, and to throw its hallowing influence over all the events of humble life—to baptise, instruct, and

marry the young, to counsel the living, to comfort the dying, to bury the dead, to insure that there shall be no dying ear on which the accents of mercy shall not fall, and no weary soul who shall not hear of a heavenly rest—that is the object which an endowed and established Church seeks to accomplish, and a greater or more beneficent object it is impossible for the mind of man to conceive. That, no doubt, may be said to be an ideal picture, and that, however beautiful in theory, it has too often been but poorly realised in fact. That is true, just because it is true that imperfection cleaves to all human things. But it is still more true that there is no country on the face of the earth where that picture has been more fully and faithfully realised than in our own. No more comely, no more saintly, and, taking the mass of its ministers all through its history, no more cultured church was ever given to a people ; and no church has a better record to show of good service done for God and country. Scotland has cause to be grateful for those endowments which have made the parochial system what it is, which have come down as a spiritual patrimony, secured in the soil, and which, through all the changes of centuries, have provided an open church, and the free ministration of religion to the people of this land. To this slender, but permanent provision for religious instruction and worship, more perhaps than to any other cause, do the Scottish people of to-day owe the character they bear, and the place they hold among the nations of the world. These endowments are, above

all, the patrimony of the poor ; of the poor of to-day and of the years to come ; their spiritual provision in the design of the original donors, their inalienable birthright, their inheritance by the prescriptive right of centuries. It is the only property in this land which the poor may be said to possess. In virtue of that patrimony, the ideal of an establishment is realised to-day in many a broad parish in Scotland. There, under the shelter of its aged trees, stands the humble parish church, with its quiet graveyard, where a parish church has been for many hundreds of years, the sound of its Sabbath bell summoning generation after generation to the house of prayer, and coming back to many a Scotchman far away like a faint and happy dream. There, round the old walls, lies the village churchyard, where the holy dead repose. There stands the humble manse, the centre of Christian light and life, its occupant an educated son of the people, his parishioners' pastor, counsellor, and friend. From these abodes of culture and piety there have gone forth some of Scotland's very worthiest sons. Were there no such thing as dissent among us, and the whole body of the people belonged to the national Church, there are hundreds of parishes where that Church, by means of her ancient and her modern self-given endowments, is perfectly capable of making adequate provision for the spiritual wants of the people.

Disendowment would at one sweep efface, or greatly alter, this state of things. It would close the now free and open door of every parish church in the land. It would rob 876 parishes of an average income of £270 a year. From 190 parishes

where the living is under £150, it would take the annual exchequer grant of £57. From 41 burgh parishes it would take an average sum of £396. Those hundreds of parishes now solely provided for by the Established Church, would, on the death of their present incumbents, be permanently deprived of religious ordinances according to the Presbyterian form, or have to tax themselves far beyond their means, or become spiritual paupers, dependent upon others for a provision of which they were most unrighteously deprived. The bulk of the people in these parishes are dependent on their daily labour for their daily bread. Although they can contribute little to the Church out of their slender means, they can contribute largely to it by their pious lives. There is much to justify the fears of many thoughtful men, that the effects of disendowment upon our hard-working industrious poor, and especially the rural population, would be disastrous in the extreme. Few men gave more thought to this subject than Dr Chalmers. The conclusion to which he came is one in which many will acquiesce: 'Never without the peculiar facilities and resources of a church establishment, will there be a full supply of Christian instruction in the land. A practical heathenism will spread itself over the rural provinces, and will accumulate more and more in our cities.'¹

What is the system for which, as greatly superior, we are asked to exchange the old, tested and hallowed as it has been by the usage of ages? It is a visionary system of Voluntaryism, *which has never yet been fully tried in a country with conditions*

¹ *Political Economy*, p. 329.

similar to our own, and which, where it has been tried, has not proved so splendid a success as to warrant its supremacy among ourselves. We are perpetually pointed to the religious condition of the United States, as an illustration of the admirable working of Voluntaryism. The answer must be that the condition of things in that country, politically, socially, and religiously, is not one which we in this land have any reason to envy or to imitate. The Rev. Dr Hall of New York says: 'Side by side with our joy over ten millions of communicants is the pitiful tale of domestic distress and pinching poverty in the homes of those who minister to these millions.' Dr Talmage says: 'There are a great many of the ministers of religion who are half-starved to death. . . . In the United States to-day the salary of ministers averages less than six hundred dollars (£120), and when you consider that some of the salaries are very large, you, as business men, will immediately see to what great straits many of God's noblest servants are this day reduced.' In the report on home missions read at the Pan-Presbyterian Council held at Philadelphia, 1880, we find the following: 'Oh, if many of our men of means only realised how inadequate the support of most of our ministers is, producing all over the land, burning brains, and aching hearts, and broken spirits, and crushed energies, and frustrated powers, and physical wrecks, and disqualifying men for the taxing, burden-bearing life of their pastors, they would more cheerfully lay their means on the altar of the Lord, for the use of his Levites.' Voluntaryism has not been in the States a very decided success. But

even were it otherwise, that would constitute no argument for its introduction among ourselves. For the conditions of the two countries are totally different. There is no parallel whatever between an old and settled country like this, whose institutions have been the slow growth of ages, the outcome of the gathered wisdom and experience of the past, and those young and vigorous empires which, under totally different conditions, are shaping a civilisation, and creating institutions and a nationality of their own.

There is one great and sad difference between this country and the great English-speaking nationalities across the sea, which forms a most serious element in the consideration of this question, and which seems to us to intensify the unwisdom and unpatriotic character of the movement for disendowment. In these new countries, with their illimitable soil and vast resources, pauperism and poverty, in our sense of the term, can hardly be said to exist.

In Scotland, taking the census of 1881, there was one pauper in every thirty-nine of the population, and in England one in every thirty-two. Of the 6,600,000 houses in the United Kingdom, one in every thirty-six was engaged in the sale of intoxicating drinks. A very large proportion of our criminals comes from the ranks of the wretched poor. 'Si l'on veut diminuer le nombre des malfaiteurs—ce qui n'est pas impossible—il faut rendre plus heureux, et par cela meilleurs, ceux qui appartiennent aux classes inférieures de la société.'¹ Immediately overlying our enormous pauper popu-

¹ Vidocq.

lation is another dense stratum always on the verge of pauperism ; and above that another stratum still of respectable working-men, who have a severe and incessant struggle to make the two ends meet. And not merely in the working-class, but among those who have not to toil with their hands, there is always a large number who, through causes over which they had no control, have a hard fight to maintain a respectable appearance, and to hide their destitution from the world. None but those who have charge of charities designed for the relief of decayed gentlemen and gentlewomen, or whose profession gives them access to the sacred privacy of the home, can have any conception of the extent to which genteel destitution prevails, and of the poignancy of the misery of which it is the prolific cause. To ask such people, whose life is one long privation, to give to the support of religion, would be a cruel and heartless jest.

It would be difficult to form an accurate estimate of the numbers in almost all classes of society who must be reckoned as poor, but we have every reason to know that it is far beyond what is generally supposed. Nor is there much indication of any considerable diminution in their numbers in the years to come. There is one fact, however, which speaks volumes on this point, and which, familiar to the few, should be startling to all. It was shown by the census of 1881 that here in Scotland one family in every four 'had only one room for its habitation, and that sixty-five per cent., or nearly two-thirds, of the families of Scotland lived either in one room or two.' No words can describe the misery of which

that fact tells. The unhealthy physical, moral, and spiritual conditions implied in such a state of things are beyond verbal measurement. That one family in every four within this land, which boasts so loudly of its education and its religion, should, by or without their own fault, be compelled or contented to house themselves in hovels of one room—that a fourth of all our children should come into the world, grow up to manhood and womanhood, and pass through life, and out of it, amid conditions like these—is a deplorable and disgraceful fact, which ought to strike the people of this country, and especially the members of our warring churches, with a startling shock of sorrow, surprise, and shame. Is that a condition of things which will justify the churches of this land in wasting their much-needed energies in internecine feuds? I deliberately say, that that is a state of matters which has been greatly aggravated by our religious divisions, and which would be greatly mitigated if these divisions were to come to an end. If it be said that the fact under consideration is but a poor justification of an establishment, I answer that only by a great and united national Church, on the basis of establishment and endowment, can this national sore be in any measure healed. For we have here a large and permanent element in our population whom, above all others, in their own interest and in that of the State, it is of importance to bring under the influence of religion, but who are the least desirous and the most unable to provide themselves with the means of grace. It is just in this class that the greatest indifference to religion prevails. It is not only

desirable that the door of the sanctuary should be free and open to them, so that they can enter it without any feeling of obligation to others, but it is of the utmost importance, that if they do not seek the ministries of religion, the ministers of religion should seek them. For this is a case in which manifestly the voluntary principle of supply and demand will not apply, any more than it will apply to the subject of education. Indifference to the benefits of education prevails most widely among those who are most in need of it ; and therefore legal provision has been made for the instruction of the poor, and the State has wisely insisted that in no instance shall that provision be neglected. But religion is as great a factor in the welfare of communities as education, and if the one cannot be safely left to the inclination, or caprice, or apathy of the individual, just as little can the other. Private enterprise is in both cases equally helpless ; public and aggressive effort equally necessary.

There is another equally significant fact. The very narrowest limits within which a family can be brought up with decency, is a house of two rooms. But two in every three of the families of Scotland are restricted within these limits. It may be safe to say that of the large proportion of those who, whether in town or country, are thus accommodated, their means are straitened, and the struggle for life is hard. They are the sons and daughters of manual toil ; agricultural labourers and cottars in the country, and the humbler class of citizens both in country and town. There are few who more prize religious ordinances than members of this

class. It would be sad if it were necessary, and cruel if it were unnecessary, to lay a heavy tax on them for the support of religion. The Scottish artisan and labouring man has a high sense of self-respect, and when he finds it impossible with a large family and a small income to meet the heavy demands which are made upon him in the matter of seat rents and contributions, he will simply cease to take what he cannot pay for, and gradually drift into habits of non-church attendance.¹ There is yet another fact. In spite of all the advantages of a national Church, and of all the efforts to multiply parishes by voluntary endowment, in spite too of the great work which the sister churches are accomplishing, the fact remains—and in face of the active infidel propaganda which is at work in all our large towns, and to a lamentable extent is poisoning the minds of our working-men, it is a deplorable fact—that the population of Scotland has largely outgrown the means of grace. It is calculated that one-sixth of the population of Scotland are outside the Christian Church. These are the circumstances in which it is coolly proposed to alienate from the cause of religion in Scotland a sum of £300,000 a year. In view of the facts, a more unpatriotic proposal was never laid before a nation.

Is the voluntary system fit to cope with the State of things which has now been described? We have ample means at hand for answering that question. We have two great non-established churches in this

¹ The system of pew-letting which has been allowed to creep into our city parish churches is probably illegal, and certainly pernicious, and ought forthwith to be ended.

land. We have the Free Church, which has invented and put in operation perhaps the most splendid machinery for the support of ordinances on the voluntary principle which was ever devised. We have the United Presbyterian Church, also provided with an admirable system of church finance. It would be unpatriotic to utter a single disparaging word of the magnificent work which the Free Church has done for Scotland, and which has laid it under an everlasting debt of gratitude. So far as Scottish Presbyterianism is concerned, its victory has been a victory all along the line. It has opened the fountains of Christian liberality to an extent which has perhaps never been surpassed in the history of Christianity. But it has not been able to accomplish an impossible task.

Our already exceeded limits prevent us from entering on this important part of our subject into any detail. The attention of the people cannot be too frequently and earnestly called to the following facts and figures: 'There are 356 rural parishes (of which 241 are old parishes), with an average population of 1084, in which there is no Free Church. In the remaining parishes, the ministers of 716 Free Churches are not self-supporting. In the Gaelic Highlands, where the Free Church has 201 congregations, only 31 are self-supporting.' In 1883, only 291 out of the 1064 congregations, or exactly one-fourth, were self-supporting. There are 14 presbyteries with 124 charges, in which there is not one single self-supporting congregation. The Sustentation Fund has been justly called the sheet-anchor of the Free Church, but it is an anchor

which does not seem to hold. The yearly contributions of the people per head grow less and less. The number of self-sustaining charges had gone down from 320 in 1878 to 296 in 1885, a decrease in 7 years of 7 per cent.

Turning for a moment to that other great body which, by its good work, has won the gratitude of the country, we find that there are 736 parishes in which there is no United Presbyterian Church ; and that, out of its total number of 559 congregations, only 328 are self-supporting, leaving 231, or upwards of 41 per cent., more or less dependent upon wealthier congregations. The United Presbyterian is emphatically the church of the large towns, its great centres being Glasgow, Edinburgh, Paisley, and Greenock, the presbyteries which bear these names comprising as nearly as possible the half of its entire membership. That it is not a system suited to country districts is frankly admitted. It is not merely to large towns, it is to the well-to-do population of these towns, that its efforts are principally confined. The membership of these churches is very largely composed of the comfortable middle class. It is no taunt to say that a purely voluntary church must necessarily to a great extent be conducted on commercial principles. As it aims to be self-supporting, it is right that it should be planted where it will pay, and, when necessary, transferred from a poor paying to a good paying locality. Among communities such as those of the colonies, where extreme poverty is practically unknown, and where the great bulk of the people have enough and to spare, such a system may work well enough, but in a land like

this, where two in every three of the population have a struggle to supply themselves with the necessaries of life, it is a system which should be resorted to only in the last extremity.

When the circumstances are calmly considered, and when it can be clearly shown that there is need for all, and for more than all, that endowments and voluntary effort combined can accomplish to overtake the spiritual destitution of the land, the proposal to disendow the Church of Scotland seems one of the most astounding that was ever proposed for a nation's acceptance by reasonable men, and if carried into effect by the legislature, would be one of the greatest acts of injustice ever perpetrated. To such a proposal, therefore, as a way out of our present troubles, we have no alternative but to offer the most strenuous and determined opposition; and in doing so, we are not 'hugging special emoluments and privileges and immunities merely on account of religious opinions,' and 'as a favoured class.' That will be remembered as the utterance of one who might well have spoken more justly and wisely. These endowments, which came down from our forefathers, we desire to conserve, not for our own sakes, but for the sake of our children and our children's children, and for the land we all love so well. In doing so, we can use the words of Chalmers: 'In contending for an Established Church and for the integrity of its endowments, we feel as if embarked on a struggle of pure and high patriotism, believing, as we do, that the cause of our venerable Establishment is pre-eminently the cause of the common people.' To all solicitations

and appeals to do what we are assured would be a noble, a generous, and a patriotic thing, by letting the endowments go, we have one simple answer: We dare not. They are not ours to will away. Of this great property of which, in the providence of God, we are the holders, we are but the trustees for this generation and for those that are to come. We dare not, as we shall answer to God, consent to an act of spoliation which will deprive every parish in this land of a substantial and permanent provision for gospel ordinances, and which will deprive the poor in every parish of the one property which they possess—their immemorial right to a free participation of the bread of life. We cannot consent to an act which, on the face of it, is to make the poor of all our parishes, and especially our rural population, spiritual paupers, dependent upon the wealthy congregations in our large towns for what is now, and for long ages has been, their own. We cannot give up a solid fact for what may prove a mere fiction, nor risk a certainty for a vague peradventure. If our Scottish endowments are to be confiscated and secularised, the responsibility for the change must lie on other shoulders than ours.



ST GILES' LECTURES.

SIXTH SERIES—THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

LECTURE VIII.

UNION OF SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIANS—IS IT
NOT STILL POSSIBLE AND DESIRABLE ON
THE OLD HISTORIC LINES?

By the Right Rev. ALEXANDER F. MITCHELL, D.D., Professor of
Ecclesiastical History in the University of St Andrews; and
Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.



AT last General Assembly I endeavoured to commend to my fellow-countrymen a nobler policy than that of the disestablishment and disendowment of their old Reformed Church. I felt confident that they had only, calmly and impartially, to reflect on the consequences which would ensue from the hasty adoption of the harsh proposals of a clamant minority, to make sure that these proposals should be waived, and the more excellent way of conciliation, and, if possible, of reunion, should be earnestly canvassed and striven for as it has never yet been. Is it presumption in me now to seek to say a few words more in support of the policy

I then advocated? I humbly trust it will not be deemed so. I begin by adverting to the past policy of the Church of Scotland in this matter. It is thus indicated in what may be termed her earliest manifesto after the sad events of 1843: 'Towards our brethren who have gone out from us, it is our earnest desire to let brotherly love continue. We cannot admit that the course which they have followed is one to which they have been impelled by an irresistible necessity; but such appears to be their deliberate conviction, and we give them credit for their sincerity. . . . Instead of indulging in unfavourable constructions of the professions and practices of those who are absent, we feel it to be incumbent on us to judge ourselves without partiality, that we may put no stumbling-block or occasion to fall in our brethren's way, and that thus we may be the better prepared to follow the things which make for peace, and wherewith one may edify another.' Such were the words in which the General Assembly, in its pastoral letter to the people of Scotland then, invited our fathers to rally round the old Church, and to lend their hearty aid in repairing the breaches which had been made in her walls. Such was the policy of conciliation, and of quiet but persistent constitutional improvement, which they announced it was their determination to follow, and by the announcement and prosecution of which they persuaded many younger men to enter the ranks, and bear their share in the heavy task which the events of '43 had devolved on them. Such, above all, was the spirit which animated and glowed in the breast of their great leader,

Dr James Robertson, one of the truest patriots and most catholic-minded Christians in Scotland whom it has been my lot to know. It was this which led him, in 1853, to write: 'The Free Church must be brought to feel that it is her interest as well as ours, that reunion should take place.' 'The greatest difficulty in the way would probably be in framing such a preamble as would suffice to save the honour of those who left us. *But I should be prepared on this point to make great concessions, conceiving that in such a case the truest honour would accrue to those who should show the most conciliatory spirit.*' Again, in 1859, he wrote to a distinguished member of the Free Church, still alive, and still earnest for reunion on the old lines: 'I can honestly say that for many years past it has been one of the first wishes of my heart to have our lamentable breaches healed, and so healed, moreover, as to include in the healing process the United Presbyterian as well as the Established and the Free Church.'

It was because they had come to share his views in this matter, and to feel his quickening influence, that several of the younger ministers of that time were led to welcome his declaration in the Assembly of 1860, that if the Church ever went to Parliament for a new act regulating the settlement of ministers, it should not be for an act legalising the veto, but for one giving the congregations a direct voice in the choice of their ministers. And when others, year after year, urged the other method of relief from the defects of Lord Aberdeen's act, it was our reverence for him, and deep conviction of the soundness of the views he had taught us, and of the desirableness of

that reunion for which he longed, which led us to embark in the movement for the abolition of patronage and of the act of 1712. This movement, as you know, was started in 1866, and after various fortunes was brought to a successful issue in 1874. The charge has again and again been made, that the movement was to a large extent a strategic one, mainly meant to defeat or 'dish' our dissenting brethren, instead of being one which we had come to see was called for, both by the position and necessities of our own congregations, and by our desire to satisfy the reasonable wishes of those without, and to open up the way for their honourable return to the Church of their fathers. Having been with Dr Pirie the first joint-convener of the Patronage Committee, and well acquainted with the sentiments of its leading members, I deem myself bound, indignantly, to repel that charge. We never admitted, indeed, that our dissenting brethren held the key of the position, or, as Dr Begg expressed it, had acquired a vested interest in the continuance of any corruptions or defects of the old Church; so that, without their leave, we who had clung to her, and sought in every way to make her still a blessing to the land, were not fully entitled to take action to bring under the notice of Parliament any matter which we felt to be a grievance, interfering with her usefulness, and deserving to be remedied. Political men of all parties appeared at that time to frankly concede this—the thirty-seven Scottish members who accompanied Dr Macleod in his interview with the prime minister; the Duke of Argyll and other friends of the Church in the House of Peers, and

Lord Advocate Young, the Scottish representative of the Liberal ministry then in power.¹

I deem it my duty further to say this in our vindication, that no sooner did we make up our minds to move for the abolition of this long-standing grievance, than those of us who did so, strove as far as we could to enlist in the cause of reform and reunion, the sympathies of Free Church brethren whom we knew, and to ascertain what, in addition to that which we sought, those who had left us would desire to get, in order to open the way for our being once more united in one Church. The answer given to our private advances was not such as to encourage more public overtures. For a time the Committee was discharged, and when it was once more reconstituted, the guidance of it passed into other hands. The movement, however, continued to gather strength, notably so during the year when the distinguished man, whose sudden removal we are at present so deeply deploring, took charge of it, and got so many of the patrons to consent not to oppose the repeal of the Act of Queen Anne. In 1870 the Assembly may be said to have finally committed itself to the movement with the greatest heartiness, and the speeches then made by Lord Gordon, Dr Pirie, and others, are proof more than

¹ In one of his speeches as a candidate for the representation of the Wigtown Burghs, in the spring of 1874, he further denied that the action of the government, in the matter of the Irish Church, indicated hostility to establishment. 'They had,' he said, 'the declaration of all the leaders of the party at the time that measure was before Parliament, that such was not their views—that they were dealing with a purely exceptional case, there being nothing parallel in it to the case of England or the case of Scotland.'

sufficient that the spirit which animated the leaders of the Church in this new departure, was a spirit, not of jealousy or hostility, but of conciliation and brotherly love towards our brethren of other Presbyterian Churches. On that occasion Lord Gordon said: 'I look upon this question, not solely with reference to the interests of our own church; I look upon it as a step which may lead, if not to incorporation, at least to co-operation with other Christian churches. Our friends of the Free Church, when they left in 1843, expressly declared in their formal protest that *it was the right and duty of the civil magistrate to maintain and SUPPORT an establishment of religion in accordance with God's Word*' (thus recognising the two great principles of establishment and endowment, for which my predecessor has so eloquently contended), 'and Dr Chalmers and many others have since expressed strong opinions as to the advantages of the territorial arrangements arising from the constitution of an Established Church.¹ . . . I, for one, should

¹ In the same debate Dr Smith of North Leith said: 'In 1866, when this movement took a broad and wide shape, the question came to be as to the possibility of providing, by the successful issue of it, such a platform as would be a common meeting-ground for all the scattered sections of the Church of Scotland. I would like much to speak of that, but am prevented from a sense of generosity to other bodies; some of our friends have great difficulties to face in regard to this matter, and this very week they must face them in very trying circumstances, and I think we should not, by one word or reference, increase their difficulties. Some of the other churches have made great sacrifices, and are putting forth great efforts to advance Christ's cause at home and abroad. Let us rejoice in their success and emulate their endeavours, and we may meet in spirit with them, although we may never meet in the same house as a united Assembly.'

rejoice exceedingly to see a comprehensive Presbyterian Church in Scotland. It is of importance that we should present a combined front of resistance against various elements at present directing their attacks against us.' Soon after the debate closed, I sought to bring this noble-hearted Christian statesman into contact with a friend who is a warm defender of the policy of the majority of the Free Church. I introduced them to each other in the Parliament House, and started them to talk on the subject of which Lord Gordon's heart was then so full. But it was all in vain. My friend was so wedded to the position of the majority of the Free Church, and so jealous of what he thought its honour required, that, so far as I can remember, he gave us no encouragement, and promised us no help towards the success of our movement.

It may be said, as it has been, that even though we met with so little encouragement, we need not have desisted so soon from our endeavours. But it was felt by most of us that it would have been a very delicate matter indeed for us to do more, at a time when they were occupied in negotiating another union, in regard to which, difficulties had then just begun to emerge. It might have exposed us to misconstructions still more serious than those from which we suffered, and far less honourable to us. This is very fully brought out in the speeches of the late Principal Campbell, Lord Polwarth, and Dr Smith in the union debate which occurred in the same Assembly, and was duly chronicled.¹

¹ *Patronage, Presbyterian Union, &c., a Chronicle of the General Assembly of 1870*, pages 342, &c.

Our memorial on the subject of patronage, it will be remembered, was prepared at the request, not of a Conservative but of a Liberal prime minister, and was pressed on his attention by Liberal as well as Conservative members of both Houses of Parliament. Whatever may have been the private surmises of some who were hostile to the movement, no indication was given to us during the three years he remained in office, after our memorial was presented, that he thought our demand unreasonable, or desired further explanation in regard to it. Nay, it is an open secret that the Lord Advocate Young was instructed to prepare, and actually did prepare in 1873, a draft of a bill dealing, *inter alia*, with this subject, as well as with the subject of teinds, which probably might have been introduced in the succeeding session of Parliament, had the government remained in office. This is surely sufficient to show that the government then thought those within the Church were not precluded by past events from urging that the matter should be taken up, and that they had sufficient backing in the country to warrant the government of the day in doing so. With 1874, a Conservative government took the place of the Liberal one, and with the hearty co-operation of many leading Liberals in both Houses of Parliament,¹ passed that bill for the abolition of the Act of Queen Anne, which had been so earnestly desired by the Church, and was

¹ The Duke of Argyll, Earls Granville, Rosebery, &c., heartily co-operated in the House of Peers, with the Dukes of Richmond and Buccleuch; Sir W. Harcourt, Sir Robert Anstruther, Mr Lowe, &c., in the House of Commons, with Mr Disraeli and Lord Advocate Gordon.

longed for by not a few outside her pale, as likely to issue in the preparation of other measures tending to bring us nearer to each other. If we did not at that crisis do all we ought to have done to carry out the noble intentions of the Duke of Argyll and Lord Gordon, it was owing in part no doubt to division among ourselves, but mainly to the way in which the great concessions we felt we had made to our brethren outside were ignored or misconstrued. Our course ever since has been on the same lines as the action of our Union Committee, and its communications with the sister churches clearly show. Our desire has not been to tempt the laity to break with their ministers, to whom they had lovingly adhered, nor to filch away individual ministers and congregations, but to do all we could to promote more friendly relations, whether those of federation or organic union, with the churches themselves. The best proof of this is the recent action of our Church Interests' Committee, in regard to Mr Finlay's bill, and the words that come to us almost from the grave of the leader we have just lost: 'There is no inconsistency between our present attitude of defence, and the attitude of conciliation which the Church has so long maintained towards our dissenting brethren. It is only by showing how deeply we prize our own principles that we can win their respect—if not disarm their opposition—and possibly lead them even yet to see that there is a more excellent way towards religious peace in Scotland, than by destroying its old historic Church, and trying to build again on its ruins.'

What this more excellent way is, has in part been shown by my eloquent predecessor, and shall in the sequel be attempted to be shown by me. And may God himself touch my lips as with a live coal from the altar, that I may speak earnestly, lovingly, and faithfully, and that my feeble words may reach the hearts of my fellow-countrymen, whom I long to see once more gathered into the old National Church.

I. Is not union between the Presbyterian Churches still possible on the old historic lines? Even before the movement for the abolition of patronage began, I ventured to affirm that it was the duty of our National Church 'to do what she could to satisfy our brethren without, that we were still a living branch of the true vine—a true member of Christ's mystical body holding the Head, as Dr Hanna in his well-known sermon frankly admitted—and a great power for good in the land, and so to endeavour to draw them closer to us again, either into amicable alliance, or into still more intimate union.' A somewhat similar course was advocated by my honoured friend, Dr Crawford, from the moderator's chair, a year or two later, and was defended by him afterwards with great ability and kindness, when it was called in question, and pronounced to be chimerical and impracticable. In my address to last Assembly, I gave my reasons for holding that union on the old lines was still possible, and that it was not likely to be brought about on any other lines, and was far more likely to be hindered and retarded, than to be helped, by the scheme then being advocated by numbers of our brethren in

the dissenting churches. Many things that have occurred since have tended to confirm this view, and to show that it is pretty widely entertained without, as well as within the National Church. The day after the close of the Assembly I received the first rough outline of a plan which had even then commended itself to a number of our brethren outside, and which in the course of the summer they matured and published. Ten days later, I received from a beloved and honoured father, whose praise is in all the churches, a note in which he was so good as to say: 'Allow me to thank you for your closing address. I read it with the deepest interest and satisfaction. . . . From the position which you and your brethren have taken up, I trust you will not go back. I was quite refreshed by your statements and appeals.' A few weeks after, an esteemed brother professor in America wrote me: 'The sympathies of Americans are not altogether on the side of disestablishment. I feel, when I come into Great Britain, that there are very excellent reasons why there should be National Churches, which could not apply to a new country such as the United States. I have also learned that the separation of Church and State is not so entire, even in America, as most think; and that the grave problem of national education is still unsolved there. The separation of the Church from the State carries with it in the end the separation of the national schools from the Church, and in this there are grave perils which stare us in the face in America.' The magnificent paper of Dr Donald Fraser, in the *Contemporary* for August, is a more

significant indication still of the direction in which the thoughts of independent, reflecting, and patriotic Scotchmen are turning; and to me it is particularly gratifying, as proving that among my correspondents of 1866, one who is a host in himself, is still 'faithful found' to the opinions he then had the courage to avow. The force of this tendency, however, has been far more emphatically shown by the recent series of enthusiastic meetings in defence of the old Church, and by the resolutions in favour of a policy of conciliation and union adopted at almost all of them; as well as by the amazing number of earnest letters on the subject which have since appeared in some of the most esteemed of our daily newspapers, and by the able articles of the editors, especially those of the *Scotsman* and the *Glasgow Herald*. Many have advocated reunion, or reconstruction, of the Presbyterian Churches on the old lines, and some have given valuable suggestions for making such a reunion as generally as possible acceptable and effectual. Are all these evidences of interest in the proposal of a really united Presbyterian Church, at once established and free, to be pronounced a vain delusion? Is it merely a devout imagination to think of yet again realising in Scotland such a church as Knox laboured to found, Melville strove to build up, and Carstares to restore? Is this idea to be contemptuously set aside because a few leading ecclesiastics have hastily pronounced their *non possumus*, or because it conflicts with the arrangements of certain wire-pullers and crotcheteers, who have long been allowed far too much of their own

way? As if not sure of the result of calm deliberate reflection, they have been doing their very utmost to hurry on a decision of this question before the country was ripe for it, and to snatch a victory before the nation was roused to the real import of the contest—a victory, it humbly appears to us, sought more as a triumph for sectarian and sectional purposes, than for the promotion of the real and lasting interests of our common Presbyterianism. But the laity must be called into our counsels, and the deliberate opinion of the majority of them, apart from political issues, be sought and obtained ere a stone of the goodly fabric our fathers reared is to be torn down. The voice of the country, so far as it can be gathered from recent demonstrations, certainly does not seem to be in favour of a policy of hasty, wanton, and much less of vengeful destruction. All things lead us to cherish good hope that the idea of reunion on the old historic lines is not yet to be abandoned by the nation, that it is still accounted worthy of mature consideration, and that, if men of all parties will only act wisely, forbearingly, fearlessly, and in right earnest, it may still be possible with God's help to realise it. At any rate, there is a firm determination on the part of many without, as of all within the Church, that the hallowed structure shall not be dismantled or demolished by ruthless hands, till every effort has been made, by thoughtful action and kindly conciliation, to endeavour to supply aught that may be lacking, to rectify aught that is wrong, and to preserve or improve all that is found to be essential to the symmetry, grandeur, and

stability of the holy and beautiful house under which we and our fathers have found shelter, and round which for centuries have gathered all the highest aspirations and noblest traditions of the people of this old Christian land. On these accounts they cannot but welcome such a bill as that of Mr Finlay, and own with Lord Moncreiff that it is 'a spirited and patriotic attempt to settle a distressing controversy,' and substantially concedes all that moderate Free Churchmen plead for.

II. Granting, then, that union is still possible, is it not also desirable? That, surely, is a question which is susceptible only of one answer, and there is need of no lengthened process of reasoning to commend the answer to any one who bears in mind the Master's affecting prayer on the eve of His last sufferings, and the earnest exhortations to love and unity which He so often addressed to his followers. These, no doubt, point to something far higher and better than mere outward unity—to a bond which binds them to their Master, and to each other even when the other is broken. But they will only receive their complete fulfilment and realisation when that deep inner unity strives to manifest itself in some external way, whether it be by full union and communion, or by friendly alliance or by federation, such as will enable them to live in harmony and work in concert. The many sad misunderstandings and irritations that arise from, and are kept alive and growing by our alienation of heart and open disunion, the lamentable waste of power and money which our divisions entail on our country, the increasing evils which spring from

them to those without, as well as to those within reach of the means of grace and the pale of the Christian church, all combine to proclaim, as with trumpet tone, that a great change is needed among us to fit us to do the Master's work rightly and successfully. That bitterness, envy, uncharitableness, and evil-speaking which still abound, that feverish strife to overlap or outvie one another's agencies, that weary contention for sectional triumph and a foremost place which have unhappily been so prevalent among us ever since the first Voluntary controversy broke out, must be henceforth and for ever banished, if our deep inner oneness is to be more constantly kept in view, and the sense of it to become more practically influential. I have no desire to exaggerate the evils of our past and present unhappy state. If that is so great a scandal and an injustice as it has lately been proclaimed to be, the scandal is mainly with those who exalt points into principles, and instead of living at peace with their neighbours, are continually 'for war,' and never weary of repeating, *Delenda est Carthago*. If it be an injustice, that is so mainly because the minority will not be content to let the majority decide and rule in this matter, nor consent to live in peace and quietness unless they are allowed to have things all their own way. Neither have I any desire to exaggerate the importance and advantages of organic union, or to represent it as either the necessary condition or the indispensable medium towards arriving at a better state of things than now exist in our land. Yet I hold it worthy to be kept before us as the goal to which our efforts

should ultimately be directed, worthy to be striven for even now in the midst of abounding indifference and misrepresentation, and I honour those who strive for it, even those of them who do not in all things follow with us. I agree, indeed, with my esteemed friend, Dr Schaff of New York, who has so largely helped to form and extend the general alliance of the Presbyterian Churches, when he says: 'Unity of outward organisation is not *absolutely* necessary for the unity of the Church. This is essentially spiritual. Our Saviour promised that there will be one *flock* and one shepherd (as the Greek original and revised version have it), but not one *fold* and one shepherd (as the Latin Vulgate and authorised version wrongly and mischievously render the passage, John x. 16). There may be many folds, and yet one and the same flock under Christ, the great arch-shepherd of souls. Even in heaven there will be "many mansions." Denominationalism or confessionalism has no doubt its evils and dangers, and is apt to breed narrowness, bigotry, and uncharitableness. It is not the best state of the Church, but it is far better than a dead or tyrannical and monotonous uniformity. It will ultimately pass away in its present shape, and give place to a better state when Christians shall no more be divided by human designations and distinctions, but be perfectly united in the great Head. The Lord will in his own good time bring cosmos out of chaos, and overrule the discord of Christendom for the deeper concord.' Still, even he admits, and I most thoroughly concur with him that there may be sects, or sections of the common Christian army,

‘which, after having accomplished their mission to protest against a prevailing error, or to do some specific work, ought to disband or unite with a cognate organisation, and thus diminish the number of schisms.’

Surely, if this holds true anywhere, it may be said to do so in the case of the Presbyterians of Scotland, whose differences appear to all but themselves so microscopic as hardly to supply materials for the existence of separate schools of thought, much less for the existence of separate and competing churches. I shall never forget what was said to me many years ago by a learned Jewish convert, a respected minister of the Free Church, when an attempt was being made to persuade some of her leaders to start an opposition to a Greek mission we had begun with some prospect of success in Turkey. ‘I told our chairman,’ he said, ‘that the differences between the Free and the Established Churches were so subtle, that even here in Scotland I had difficulty at times in fully realising them; but that out in Turkey, in face of the foes with whom we must both contend, they vanished altogether;’ or, as Dr Hanna more boldly put it in the sermon to which I have already referred: ‘The controversy between us and the Establishment from which we have retired does not touch the doctrine of Christ’s headship as taught in holy writ, so as to give any true ground for saying that we uphold and that the Established Church denies that headship.’ It is only a matter relating to the practical application of the doctrine or principle, and surely, if there were only the will, it might be possible to find a way by which former

misunderstandings on both sides might be explained, and former sad mistakes might be remedied. 'If,' as Dr Fraser has it, 'the ability and ingenuity which are now employed in justifying and pressing the policy of demolition were turned to the devising of a plan of reconstruction and comprehension, the result would be more quickly and easily arrived at, and much more worthy of a people with such historical traditions and associations as the Scotch.' We may not be able all at once to eradicate the wasting disease which has been allowed for so long to run its course unchecked, to the lowering of our vitality and weakening of our strength. But it is more than time we had begun to employ every lenitive and counteractive we can command to arrest its progress and improve our general health. Perhaps we may not be able so soon as some of the more sanguine hope, to bring together in one external communion all orthodox Presbyterians, much less all the true-hearted Protestants in our native land. There are not only many details, but various matters of importance, that would require first to be maturely considered and wisely arranged, ere those of us who are most nearly one could entirely coalesce. Even in regard to those Presbyterian churches which have a common origin and common standards of doctrine and discipline, there are grave practical questions awaiting settlement ere we can merge into one organisation. There is, for instance, the question whether the national Assembly is to be, as ours has ever been, a compact, manageable body of a comparatively limited number, or is to embrace the much larger number and larger proportion of ministers and elders

which the Free Church has sanctioned, or is to comprehend every minister and a representative of each kirk-session as the other churches seem to desire. We are persuaded that our own plan—the plan substantially followed for nearly two hundred years—has many obvious advantages; and our brethren of other churches, no doubt, also think that there are advantages attendant on their plans, and these differences must neither be simply brushed aside, nor too hastily settled. But even if, by striving after full and general organic union, all we were to attain meantime should be a better understanding between the churches, a more generous and kindly estimate of each other's labours and attainments, more practical sympathy with each other under difficulties and discouragements, less jealousy and misconstruction, less strained relations than have subsisted for nearly half a century past, our labours were not altogether in vain. It would be well worth persistent striving and earnest persevering prayer to gain even thus much. To attain it would be to attain a great and lasting good which could not fail, perhaps sooner than many expect, to lead on to good greater and more lasting still, and to hasten the happy consummation for which so many who deeply love their country, and venerate the Church of our fathers, are now more and more yearning.

III. But, even granting that union is desirable, might it not be purchased at too high a cost? If we are to derive from it the full benefit it is fitted to yield—if it is to be a lasting and an unmixed good to our native land; if it is to be a development and

growth out of the past, and not a wild revolution, it must be sought only under wise and just conditions. First among these I place, unhesitatingly, the old securities for the union between Church and State, provided by the fundamental statutes of the Scottish Parliaments of 1592, 1690, and 1707, and the retention, so far as it has come down to us, of the old patrimony of the Kirk, for the religious uses to which it has so long been appropriated. The importance of this was brought out by my predecessor, with such a wealth of eloquence and Christian patriotism, as must have warmed the coldest Scottish heart, and made the boldest antagonist quail. It is said, indeed, there is a drift the other way at present, a current setting in, which it is vain for us to resist. But Christian men in other lands are resisting it boldly, and so must we, if we would not prove ourselves unworthy of our fathers, and the inheritance they have transmitted to us. Christian men in our own land, outside our own Church, are resisting it manfully, notwithstanding all the efforts made to stir them up to follow a different course. And shall we prove faint-hearted, or unconcerned, or unreasonable? No, surely we will aid them to the utmost, and encourage ourselves in the Lord our God, who hitherto hath been to us 'a very present help in time of trouble,' and when the wind was high, and the sea rough, and the night dark and dismal, hath changed the storm into a calm, and made even our enemies be at peace with us. Dr MacGregor has quoted to you the weighty utterances of Drs Chalmers and Buchanan as to the value of an Established Church, if Christian

influences are ever thoroughly to pervade all ranks, and all corners of the land. Let me add to these, the striking testimony of the great German publicist, Geffcken, which, though from a different point of view, is hardly less noteworthy, and points to that union of liberty and reciprocal activity which we enjoy as the best relation between Church and State :

‘An attitude of mutual indifference,’ he says, ‘between the State and the religious community can never be desirable, even supposing it to be possible, because both concur in the most important points of contact in human society. Men may try, for the sake of avoiding collision, to reduce to a minimum these points of contact ; but the State can never dispense with religion, for the moral education of its subjects, since there is no true morality without religion. . . . History proves beyond refutation the vanity of the attempt to supply, by philosophy and abstract morality, the want of religion. The civilisation of all states alike is based in the first instance on religion ; and where the latter is obliterated, there discipline and moral rectitude rapidly decline. The foundations of the State itself become rotten, and give warnings of impending ruin. A purely negative relation between Church and State, such as would completely isolate the latter from religion, would therefore be disastrous to the nation. On the other hand, the Church cannot entirely renounce her influence over the State, and withdraw herself to the sphere of the mind, inasmuch as religious interests, from their very nature, are involved especially in the most important affairs of life. As a matter of fact, then, a really perfect separation of the State and the religious community, to say nothing of the possibility of the experiment, has never yet been attempted, not even in America (as will be shown by-and-by). . . . Every consideration therefore points to a regulated union of both powers, precisely because, within the spheres of each, lie the common elements of social prosperity. *Such a union of liberty and reciprocal activity is eminently suited to civilised Christian States*, since it affords scope for the greatest variety,

according to circumstances, in the mutual relations of both powers.¹

My predecessor has also shown you that any scheme of union, to be successful and permanent, must include the retention of the ancient endowments, as well as of the ancient relations between the Church and the State. The endowments, as he told you, are in no true sense the property of the State, have neither been created nor conferred by it, and are not national, except in the sense in which all property and old charitable endowments are so. They were at least secured to the Church by the solemn statutes of a Scottish Parliament, elected under the widest franchise; and in the Act for the union of the kingdoms, these statutes were ratified for ever, and their privileges were guaranteed to the people of Scotland by the most binding form of words which the negotiators could devise. Nothing but the clearest proof that the Church was not fulfilling the trust committed to her under these statutes, or was not willing to be advised how she might fulfil it more entirely, could warrant the taking away of her endowments, were this the sole title by which she held them. But notwithstanding the persistence with which that has of late been averred, and the charge of lamentable ignorance brought against those who call it in question, I venture once more to deny it, and to hurl back the charge of ignorance on those who have so recklessly made it. The honoured cham-

¹ *Church and State, their Relations historically developed, &c.*, by Heinrich Geffcken. Translated by E. F. Taylor.

pion who has so recently been called from our head, showed this very conclusively in that eloquent appeal which he drew up in the autumn for the Committee on Church Interests, and which has since been so widely circulated, and so highly appreciated over the length and breadth of the land. In that remarkable paper from the pen of Professor Flint, which appeared soon after in the *Presbyterian Review*, our opponents are plainly told: 'As to endowment, Established Churchmen cannot reasonably be expected to consent to a simple alienation of the teinds to secular purposes. Holding, as they do, that the teinds represent a part of a patrimony inherited by the Church, not from the liberality of the State, but from the charity of the pious of former generations, and designed for the maintenance of religion especially among the poor, obviously for them to concur in the appropriation of these teinds, without commutation or equivalent, to a secular use, must seem malversation of trust, injustice to religion, and robbery of the poor.'¹

The payment of tithes in Christian times arose out of reverence for the arrangement God had prescribed for the Church under the Old Testament, and it was in the course of centuries confirmed by the immemorial and universal custom of Christian nations. The *Second Book of Discipline*, for which our Free Church brethren were wont to cherish a

¹ With respect to establishment, Professor Flint says, in the same paper: 'Establishment seems to us a most fitting application and potent safeguard of a sacred principle, a real power for good, a favour to one church which is no more an injustice to other churches than a nobleman's title is a wrong to a commoner.'

special regard, affirms that such was the origin of tithes or teinds (for these words are but two names for one thing), and maintains that they are part of the patrimony of the Church, which may not, without sacrilege, be alienated from sacred uses. They began to be paid in the Celtic churches of Ireland and Scotland, before they came under the domination of the Church of Rome. When parishes began to be formed in Scotland, the churches were built, and the tithes within the district were gifted to them of the free-will and pleasure of the landed proprietors to whom the district belonged. Several of the deeds founding such parishes are still extant, and our constitutional historians now hold it as beyond question that these are but specimens of the way in which the process of endowment was carried on, till the payment of tithes became general in Scotland. No one has stated this more clearly than the minister of Pilrig Free Church, when he informs us:¹

‘We can trace the general rise of parishes in Scotland. We can show how the process went on. We can point to a land-owner bringing a tract of waste land under cultivation, and then building a church upon it, and endowing that church with the tithes of the surrounding district, and with some acres of land for a glebe. This foundation was quite in accordance with what the Church would expect or claim from a dutiful son, but then it was entirely the free gift of the founder. It did not originate in the common law. And perhaps it is not too much to say, that in all the registers of our religious houses which have been hitherto published, there is not a single example of any one being required by the common law to erect a parish church, and to endow it with teinds, and manse, and glebe. When churches were once erected and endowed, the common law was ready to vindicate the rights of

¹ *Old Stones for a New Church*, by J. Calder Macphail.

those to whom they belonged. And as early as the time of William the Lion, the royal authority is found enjoining the payment of tithes in the province of Moray. But the probability is that the right to these was acquired by gift before it was enforced by law.'

No doubt, as our opponents sometimes remind us, a large part of these endowments was originally given to a church which was in communion with the see of Rome, but it was also the Church of Christ in this land; and when the nation resolved that the Church of Christ in Scotland should be freed from the yoke of Rome, and recognised it, when thus freed and organised by certain ministers, 'whom God in his mercy had raised up,' as the only true Church of Christ in the land, they were bound, after making due provision for life interests, to recognise it as the true heir to the old endowments, and are bound so to recognise it till they can find a better to take its place, and to do the work assigned to it with greater efficiency and success. When you have the Scottish legislature itself designating the teinds as 'the proper patrimony' of the kirk, and the Church claiming them as such—when you have learned men like Principal Tulloch and Professor Flint, and constitutional historians like Cosmo Innes and Joseph Robertson, confirming the same view—what can you think of hard-pressed controversialists and pamphleteers, who offer only their own unsupported assertion on the other side? What but that they are not exempt from the lamentable ignorance they so confidently attribute to others, and that, if they knew a little more, they would in all probability be not a little less self-confident and dictatorial.

To these two conditions we must resolutely adhere as indispensable, if we are to be faithful to our trust, faithful to our principles, and to the highest interests of our native land. As the largest of the Presbyterian Churches, we might claim for these at the hands of our brethren a more respectful regard, even were they unanimous in the objections they bring against them, but with so many of their own ministers, elders, and people clinging to them as fondly as we do ourselves, we cannot consent to be driven from them by a minority of our fellow-countrymen. The establishment and endowment of the Church are not the main cause of the divisions which, unhappily, prevail among Scottish Christians, nor are disestablishment and disendowment necessary preliminaries to any union between the churches. Those who assert that they are, seem to me to forget that none of the unfortunate secessions which have taken place from the national Church, arose from any doubt about the propriety of a union between Church and State, or the lawfulness of participating in the ancient endowments. The leaders of all these secessions, with perhaps the exception of the almost extinct sect of the Glassites, maintained the principles of establishment and endowment as strenuously as those who did not secede. Erskine and his three comrades clung to their manse and stipends during all the years between their first deposition and their second. The Free Church has never objected to her ministers receiving State money as army and prison chaplains, or secretaries of the Bible Board, nor to any aid given to normal schools at home, or mission schools

abroad, and such a course can be vindicated only on establishment principles. So far as either the United Presbyterian or the Free Church have fallen away from these two principles, they have fallen away from the acknowledged principles of their own fathers and founders, as well as from those of the fathers and reformers of the National Church—Knox and Melville, Henderson and Johnston of Warristoun—who acted so much more cautiously in regard to the grievance of patronage, than the leaders of the Church before '43. Disendowment was not insisted on as a condition preliminary to union in the negotiations of the Presbyterian churches, either in the Australian or the Canadian colonies, nor in the negotiations for the union of the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod in Ireland. Till recently, there were ministers in all the dissenting Presbyterian churches who held both these principles, and in the Free Church especially there are still a large number of prominent laymen, as well as clergymen, who firmly maintain both principles. Any attempt to remove from the statute-book of Scotland the old legal securities for national religion and a national Church, would be resolutely resisted by them, and the confiscation of the Church's endowments could not fail to stir up bitter feelings without as well as within the Church, and to increase greatly the alienation which already unhappily exists. As Professor Flint has forcibly put it in the paper which I have already quoted: 'It is vain to expect Presbyterian union as the consequence of disestablishment. Disestablishment gained through strife can only perpetuate, increase,

and intensify disunion.' This has been unmistakably manifested in Ireland, though the Protestant churches there, Episcopalian and Presbyterian, were treated with an amount of favour we are warned that we must not expect on this side the Irish Channel. There are no symptoms of improved relations between these churches yet visible. Even those Primitive Methodists who previously ranked themselves as members of the Established Church have now drawn off. 'The increased alienation of the Roman Catholics is notorious,' and 'the Presbyterians have to submit to the precedence of two hierarchies instead of one.'

The case of America also is paraded as an example of the good effects of disestablishment and disendowment, and the ability of the Church to live and thrive apart from union with the State; but the case of a new country of almost boundless extent and unlimited capabilities, like the United States, is not necessarily an example in point, for an old land of so limited extent and resources as Scotland—where the salaries of the dissenting ministers generally, before '43, were shamefully limited; and where, notwithstanding the noble services and inspiring example of the Free Church, they are still, save in the large towns, far from what they ought to be. Except in some of the eastern states of America, there never was an established church, and in these states disestablishment was not accompanied by disendowment. The Presbyterian Churches¹ of that

¹ These are the large Presbyterian Churches of the North and of the South, the United Presbyterian Church, two or three Reformed Presbyterian Churches, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and the Welsh Presbyterians.

great country, noble and estimable as they are, share in the same divisions as ourselves at home, and are even more tasked than we, to keep pace with the rapidly increasing population that is pouring into their cities from year to year. No one can speak, save in terms of the highest respect, of their leading ministers and earnest Christian laymen, or doubt that they are doing noble service in the cause of our common Master. Even Geffcken admits that nowhere more than in America is religion felt to be a vast social power, and that the separation of Church and State is far from being the absolute one which not a few *doctrinaires* on this side desire. Everywhere the observance of the Sabbath is protected by law; religious fasts and thanksgivings, objected to by some of the sterner Voluntaries in Scotland, are appointed by law; and chaplains also, who open every sitting of Congress with prayer. But he deems it necessary to subjoin the following complementary picture, which is by no means so flattering:

‘The Voluntary system as a whole has evidently its dark sides. It makes the clergy absolutely dependent on the members of the congregation who pay them; they cannot well oppose things the public disapproval of which would make them unpopular, nay, might entail their dismissal. Hardly a preacher in the South ever uttered a word against slavery. And since they are bound to please the masses, they easily address themselves to their weaknesses, and prefer the sensational harangue to the simple proclamation of evangelical truth. Politics, accordingly, are constantly brought into the pulpit. Between 1865 and 1867, the chaplain of Congress prayed daily that President Johnson might be humbled, and his own party exalted with glory. Besides all this, the Voluntary system leads to the greatest inequality in the

position of the clergy. While popular preachers at New York and other great cities draw large salaries from their admirers, others in small communities must live by the work of their hands; while, as regards the churches themselves, their unlimited liberty tends to make them mutually exclusive.'

The number of churches in America to which no minister is attached is very large (and it is the same among the dissenters in England). 'In the report of the American Tract Society, two years ago, it was put down at twelve thousand, and in the same report it was stated that from eight to ten millions are unreached by the ordinary means of grace, while not more than one-sixth even profess to be members of any Christian church.' Mr Hughes, who supplies this information, further assures us that, having done his best to learn the opinions of the ablest and most thoughtful Americans themselves, he can find nothing in their half-century experiment of the Voluntary system to make him wish that England should follow it. Neither, surely, should Scotland. We have been told with painful iteration that disestablishment would put an end to all that rivalry and strife to overlap each other's agency, of which we had so much cause of late to complain. But is Voluntary America in better case than ourselves? So far from it, that Dr Pentecost, a distinguished Congregational minister in Brooklyn, is adduced by a recent reviewer, as testifying that 'this rivalry and jealousy crop out *most frequently* in any projected union movements for evangelistic work.'

I have still to mention, as an indispensable necessity to permanent union, that we learn to set greater

store by the principles as to which all the churches are agreed, and less by the points as to which they differ, and about which they have been divided. Some are already formulating extended articles of agreement for us, and others asking or taking for granted our assent beforehand, to those articles which were elaborated in the recent negotiations for union between the non-established churches. The result of this plan, in the case of these churches, was not such as to encourage the repetition of that course. Similar attempts in America had a similar *dénouement*, and it was found expedient in the end, in the latest negotiations for union (between the old and new school Presbyterians), that the churches should unite on the old standards and the constitution of the undivided church.

If we are ever to be one again, it humbly appears to me that it must be in the same way, that is, on the ground of what we hold in common, and what our fathers held in common before their separation. The word of command must be 'As you were again.' The Church must be substantially the old Church, as it was in happier days—in friendly alliance with the State, and pervading the national life in every possible way, and in every possible nook of the land, unfettered and untrammelled, with independent jurisdiction in spiritual matters as fully secured as human laws can secure it. Disestablishment and disendowment will not give better, or even as good security, as has been proved in the Cardross and some other cases, and is acknowledged by Dr Guthrie in his letter to the Duke of Argyll, recently reprinted. Neither would they tend to allay the

present alienation and embitterment. Their own hard experience after '43, the exasperated feeling then originated, and the sense of real or fancied wrong long brooded over, which has built up such a wall of separation between them and us, may be to them some faint index of what our feelings might be towards them, should the goodly fabric our fathers reared be remorselessly overthrown, and the religious patrimony of the humble and poor in our rural parishes, and of the neglected outcasts in our large cities, be alienated from the uses to which it has been so long dedicated. It would not be for a generation or two at anyrate, that such embitterment would be allayed. It is more probable that it never would be so, and that the last hope of the reunion of the divided fragments of the Church of our fathers would be abandoned in despair. The interests of Presbyterianism would be seriously compromised in the land where it has so long held sway. The words of the honoured champion whose recent loss we mourn, will find an echo in many hearts: 'If this old country is to be torn with ecclesiastical contention once more, we shall have the satisfaction at least of thinking that we have done what we could to avoid it, and that, if we must fight, whether we lose or win, we have been contending for a good cause, and for principles which are dearer to us than our own comfort or lives. It can matter little in a personal sense—to some of us very little—what the end may be; but the issue is a mighty one for the country, and I hope that our younger churchmen, as well as older churchmen like myself, with whom the fight in this, as in many

other matters, is nearly over, may realise this, and bear themselves well for the Church which they love and have sworn to defend.' He 'being dead yet speaketh.' His words may be regarded as a last solemn message to his brethren, and if it is indeed laid to heart and resolutely acted on, even this great sorrow shall not have been sent to us in vain.

One of our keenest opponents, in a singularly able and sympathetic analysis of the character of Samuel Rutherford—the saint of the Covenant—has said of him: 'It looks sometimes as if there were two men in him. One was the man whom all know in his letters—ardent, aspiring, and unworldly, impatient of earth, intolerant of sin, rapt into the continual contemplation of one unseen Face. . . . The other was the intellectual gladiator, the rejoicing and remorseless logician . . . the hater of doubt and ambiguity, the scorner of compromise and concession, the incessant and determined disputant, the passionate admirer of sequence and system and order in small things as in great—in *the corner of the corner of an argument*, as in the mighty world outside, with its orbits of the Church and of the State.'

In this he has limned not an individual merely, but a class of men which had not a few representatives in Scotland in the seventeenth century, and is not altogether extinct yet. With all their noble qualities and saintly lives, by their divisive courses, their distrust of their brethren, and bitter party spirit, they did grievous harm to the cause they loved, and greatly contributed to the sad reverse it

experienced at the Restoration. Is history once more to repeat itself, and the cause of Presbytery again to be fatally wounded in the house of its friends by the men 'of the corner of the corner of an argument,' who, with changing facts confronting them, that will not fit into their unchanging forms, seem determined to learn nothing and forget nothing?

There are no divisions in any part of the Christian Church, the continuance of which seem, to all but ourselves, so uncalled for or incapable of being defended on the ground of vital principle, as those which now subsist among the Presbyterians of Scotland. For these divisions of Reuben there may well be 'great searchings of heart.' The difficulties in the way of the union or federation of the Presbyterian Churches may still be acknowledged. But sure I am that few who can be persuaded calmly and impartially to examine them, will venture to pronounce them to be insurmountable, or to say that, considering the blessed consequences which would result to themselves and to the land they love, there might not well, instead of internecine war, be frank and honourable conference to ascertain whether they could not be removed or reduced to the vanishing point, and that the present time might not well be embraced as a most favourable one for such conference. By a singular concurrence of circumstances, there is once more presented to our view, and pressed on our notice, that ideal which filled the mind of our great Reformer, and which, when partially rejected by the men of his generation, was solemnly commended by him to the generations to come, and has been fondly cherished in the

minds of his leal-hearted countrymen ever since. That ideal, the partial realisation of which has made our native land what it is, and the full realisation of which alone will enable us to make it what it ought to be, is still within our reach.

Shall we who claim Knox as our spiritual father, and contend with each other who of us follow him most closely and love him best, finally thrust it away from us, and in another sense than his crafty antagonist, the Laird of Lethington, intended, pronounce our Reformer's noble plans a 'devout imagination' never more to be striven for, never now to be realised, or only to be so in some far-distant millennium which we shall never live to see? Shall we continue this painful internecine strife, and waste our energies and resources against each other, instead of uniting heart and hand to turn them to the best advantage, and use them for the common good, diffusing among the ignorant, the outcast and erring, the light and life of Christianity, and preserving for the religious training, both of the young and the adult, the fragments of ecclesiastical property which the cupidity of our nobles has spared to us? Rather, surely, adopting the dying words of the noble man who longed and laboured for this blessed consummation, and expressed his readiness to make great sacrifices of personal feeling and sentiment to secure it, we should not hesitate to say, 'there is needed but the spirit of the great Reformer, mellowed but not enervated to unite all hearts, and to make all hands co-operate in reviving, with the aid of his grace, the work of God in the midst of us, and enlightening and enlivening the

benighted and cheerless families of the land, with the light and life of the everlasting Gospel.'

I end with words I used once before, and am not ashamed to use again: 'We are loath to abandon the conviction that a reconstruction of Scottish Presbyterianism on the old national lines is not even yet to be despaired of, provided men would only patiently, and dispassionately, and resolutely set themselves to the task. If our brethren, instead of giving themselves to stir again the still glowing embers of old and fierce controversies, which caused such alienations in the past, and are likely, if renewed, to occasion more lasting alienations in the future, were to "let the dead past bury its dead," and to concur with us in proclaiming a truce of God till the approaching bicentenary of the Revolution settlement had come and gone, it might be that a nobler spirit would yet be awakened, and the gathering storm be hushed into a calm. It might be that under its glorious memories of peace and reconciliation among brethren long divided and oppressed, we might be drawn together as we have not been for many a day, and even if the way were not at once made plain for incorporating union, more seemly relations, a more loving and forbearing spirit, and more hearty co-operation might be developed and permanently secured. God grant it may be so! Lord, rebuild thy temple in our beloved land, in haste, in haste, in our day speedily! Amen and amen.'

DATE DUE

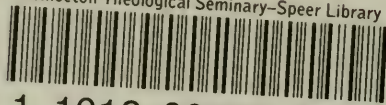
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